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MISS ALICE HUGHES

LADY LEPEL GRIFFIN AND HER SONS

52, Gower Street.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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MARKED SALMON.

THE report of "Proceedings under the Salmon and Fresh-water Fisheries Acts for 1906," just issued by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, contains the result of the experiment of the Board in marking salmon. Although since these marking experiments were started three years ago, 1,060 fish have been marked, only sixteen have been retaken. It may well be that this is due, among other reasons, to the cause mentioned in the report: "The condition of the flesh at the base of the fin where the mark is attached in some of the recaptured fish seems to show that the small proportion reported as recaptured is due in part to the labels having been sloughed off or torn away in consequence of careless marking." It is absurd to expect the class of men from whom our water-bailiffs are drawn to be expert in affixing labels to fish, an operation which requires care and skill, care not to injure the flesh at the base of the fin, skill to fix the mark securely. It surely would be worth the while of the English Board to select a certain number of rivers each year, say half-a-dozen, and send down one of their inspectors to carry out marking operations in the close time. As it is, the haphazard way in which fish are marked is far from satisfactory. On the Severn, for example, the water-bailiffs have instructions to mark all salmon stranded on the sands in the estuary before putting them off. This is done throughout the year, but whether these fish are part of a shoal or are fish ascending or descending by themselves, or what are the conditions under which they came into the place where they were stranded, are not known. If the Board of Agriculture would join with the Fishery Board and have three days' fishing, at the beginning, middle and end of the close time, marking properly all fish caught, a very valuable record would be obtained at a very slight expense.

At present the results are so few, the method so unsatisfactory and the accuracy so doubtful, that it is very likely that wholly wrong conclusions as to the habits of the fish may be drawn from them. For instance, in the report particulars of four

marked and recaptured sea-trout are given. It is said that "when marked all these fish were in the kelt condition and when recaptured they were returning from the sea in the condition of clean fish." This is rather startling, even for an official conclusion on limited facts. On looking at the table on page xi. it appears that, so far from the fish being recaptured when returning from the sea, three were recaptured at sea, and, so far as appears, might, if they had not been recaptured, have remained at sea for an indefinite time. There is no evidence to show that the fish had any intention of ascending any river. All the recaptures prove is that sea-trout which descend to the sea in the spring of one year as kelts are found in the summer of the following year in the sea off the coast, clean fish. So far as it goes, this evidence points to the fact that sea-trout do not return the same year they descend as kelts, but remain for at least a year in the sea. Another point is brought out by these three fish, namely, the smaller the fish when descending the more it grows in the sea. If it could be said that the smaller fish was the younger fish, this is only what would be expected; but it would be dangerous to make any such assumption. These fish, 3½lb., 4lb. and 5lb., may be all of the same year or may not. This is one of the cases that proves the necessity for some knowledge of the state and condition of the fish when marked, if marking is to be of any real use. If the three fish were all of the same year, the fact that the smallest almost doubled his weight in the sea would be a point of great interest; but on the facts nothing of the kind can be said. All that is shown is that sea-trout stay in the sea for a year, and that they increase from a minimum of 2½lb. to a maximum of 3½lb. The changes in length of these are only of interest when they are compared with those of the fourth fish. Of the two sea-trout of the first three whose measurements are given, the smaller increased 5½in. in length while putting on 3½lb. in weight, the larger increased 1½in. in length while putting on 2½lb. The increase in length seems large in the first fish, from 20in. to 25½in., as against the other, 25in. to 26½in. As the normal length of the small sea-trout would be about 2ft., it points to the fact that the fish had reached their full growth. It is a pity we have not got a more detailed account of the fish sent to the Board, as all we are told is that "the fish were in good condition, the pylorics being full of fat and a few sea-lice near the tail." This is what would have been expected. A careful detailed account of the condition of all the organs of a female sea-trout after a stay of known duration in the sea would have been of interest. Was she likely to spawn that autumn is the first question that suggests itself.

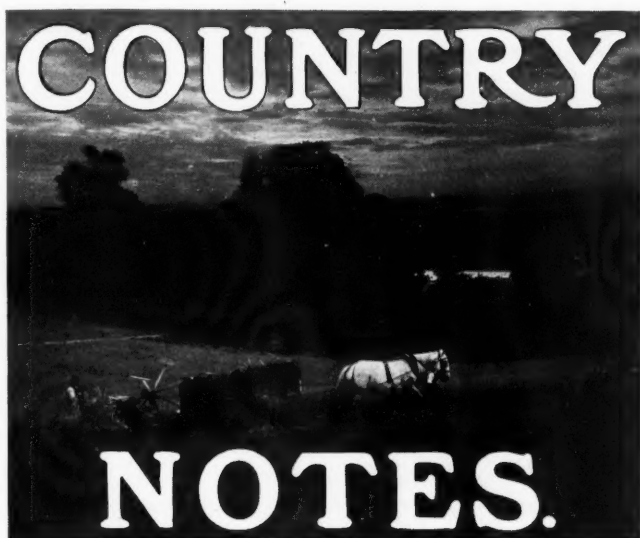
The story of the fourth fish is so remarkable and of such doubtful accuracy that the full details should be furnished. Are the statements to be relied on? If not, how far can the information of the Board of Agriculture be trusted? As told, the story is that a female sea-trout kelt was caught in the Coquet. It would be interesting to know the precise spot, how far above the tideway, how caught and marked and who is responsible for the marking and the statement. It was caught on March 3rd, 1906. The state of the water when marked is also of importance to form some opinion as to when the fish reached the sea. It is said that in seven weeks (forty-nine days from the time it was marked) it was recaptured, a clean fish, attempting to ascend the Aberdeenshire Dee, having in seven weeks doubled its weight, but not increased in length. If these facts can be proved, the case will be one of very great interest. No doubt all Nature-study books for the future will give as an official fact, asserted by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, the statement that sea-trout double their weight in seven weeks. Unfortunately, either the printer of the Board of Agriculture has made a slip or the arithmetic of the officials is not all it should be. The table on page xi. gives the date of marking, of recapture and the interval between them. They are given as: Marking, 3/3/06; recapture, 21/7/06; interval, forty-nine days. But the interval between March 3rd, 1906, and July 21st, 1906, is: March 28 days, April 30, May 31, June 30, July 20, and 28 + 30 + 31 + 30 + 20 is 139 days, not 49, and yet on page xii. the report goes on to state: "The record of No. 4 is of interest, inasmuch as the fish had travelled from the Coquet to Aberdeen, a distance of at least 120 miles, in forty-nine days . . . it had not increased in length, but its weight had doubled"! How far are the other statements of the Board as to fish accurate is the question one is bound to ask.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Lady Lepel Griffin with her sons. Lady Griffin is a daughter of Mr. Ludwig Leupold of La Coronata, Genoa, and her marriage to Sir Lepel Griffin took place in 1889.

* * It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.

COUNTRY



NOTES.

A DRY, but interesting, return has been issued from the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, giving a preliminary statement in regard to the agricultural returns for 1907. From them we learn, first, that the total area under cultivation has decreased during the year by 22,645 acres. As it stands, we are afraid this figure does not convey much meaning. Every house that is built, every garden that is laid out, every field which is made into a building estate, means the withdrawal of a certain area from cultivation, and it would be most interesting to know what quantity of the land set down as decrease has merely been claimed for building purposes. The figures in relation to crops are more easily understood. The land continues to be withdrawn from wheat and barley, but more oats, beans, peas, mangold, cabbage, kohlrabi, vetches or tares, lucerne and other crops were sown. The decrease in permanent pasture was 118,419 acres. A few more acres were devoted to flax, and nearly 2,000 more to small fruit, while there was an increase of 2,485 acres in the acreage devoted to orchards.

The census of our livestock is always extremely interesting. In horses there is an unimportant decrease, so small, indeed, that horses used for agricultural purposes may be described as stationary; but it is notable that the unbroken horses, especially those under one year old, are decreasing. There were 10,457 fewer in 1907 than in 1906. There are more milk cows, but fewer cattle of every description. On the other hand, farmers seem to have increased the quantity of their sheep, since in all classes there has been a larger quantity of ewes kept for breeding and of "other sheep one year and above" and "under one year." The same statement will apply to pigs, where the increase in breeding sows is 13.1 per cent., and the increase in "other pigs" 13.6 per cent. It is very singular that while the supply of bacon goes on mounting in this visible manner the price should still remain high. At the same time, it must be extremely advantageous for that increasing number of people who go in for dairies to keep pigs. The pig is a very profitable animal when he can be maintained out of the refuse of a farm.

In the Government report on crop prospects it is stated that "the supply of labour seems with a few exceptions to be sufficient or plentiful." But exceptional demands have been made on it. The harvest on the whole has been "fully better," to use the expressive Scottish idiom, than we should have dared to hope, and certainly it is earlier ripe for saving than we looked for; but the corn has been beaten and laid by wind and rain, so that it demands more than the usual time and work for its harvesting. The labour-saving machine cannot cut and bind the laid patches; these require the individual manual work if they are to be saved at all, and even if it be decided to leave these patches unharvested, the passage of the machine in and out of them is as tedious as working a horse-mower on a lawn beset with flower-beds.

Attention has been directed to the Irish agricultural census and its inclusion of poultry returns. We have never had anything of the same kind in Great Britain, so that it has been possible only to speculate as to whether the national property in poultry is on the increase or the decrease. During the last fifty or sixty years we know that the number of poultry in Ireland has increased by over 200 per cent. How far this was owing to the growth of the English demand must remain in doubt, as, unfortunately, the English imports of poultry from Ireland are not given. In Great Britain there has undoubtedly been a huge increase during the same period of time, and, besides that, a vast improvement in the quality

of the birds kept. A very competent expert has estimated that the value of our poultry is about £7,000,000. Of course, this would fluctuate with the season more than is the case with any other kind of livestock, because a very large number of chickens are reared and sent to market in the course of twelve months. It is probably owing to this variation that that accomplished statistician, Major Gray, while he was head of his Department at the Board of Agriculture, did not try to number the poultry. We can quite appreciate the difficulty, and yet, had it been overcome, the facts would have been very valuable indeed. What is most amazing is that concurrently with the vast home supply of chickens and eggs, our importations of both have increased enormously.

It would be a pity if Sir Walter Gilbey's appeal on behalf of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institution should ever come to be disregarded as a hardy annual. The fund has done an immense amount of good in providing pensions for destitute farmers, their wives, widows and unmarried daughters. At the present time 1,152 pensioners are maintained at an annual cost of £24,368. They are all old people and absolutely dependent upon the funds of the institution. Many are decrepit, and some physically helpless. More than half are from seventy to eighty years of age, and 373 are from eighty to ninety-six years of age. Surely at the time of the ingathering those who are prosperous can well afford to give a little of their gains to such a very deserving fund.

On the whole, it is a matter for satisfaction that the rights of the deaf man on the road have been raised by a recent accident. Those who are suffering from this affliction, in many cases, are unable to take any exercise other than that of walking on the public highway, and it would be outrageous if they were not able to do so in perfect safety. The duty of the driver of a motor-car or any other vehicle is to avoid hurting the foot passenger, whether the latter get out of his way or not. A man who has his faculties unimpaired would naturally step aside to let a carriage pass him, but should he fail to do so the driver must take care that no harm is done to him.

THE FOOTSTEP OF A LAD.

When the dew was on the birch leaf
And the barley fields were gold,
When each pale wild climbing rose tree
Had a glory to unfold,
The earth was very happy then—
But, oh! my heart was sad,
For the sound of a cooe
And the footstep of a lad.

When all the woods are barren
And the sun is but a dream,
When the east wind comes a-rushing
Down the valley and the stream,
The earth is not so careless then—
But, oh! my heart is glad
At the sound of a cooe
And the footstep of a lad.

NEMO.

We go to press this week just before the First of September that is to say, before the forecasts about the supply of partridges have been tested by results. This year it is to be feared that the First will only be nominally the opening day of partridge-shooting. On a vast majority of estates the corn is still standing, and even in the South of England much of the harvesting will have to be done in the month of September. This itself would prevent many shooters from going out. It would in any case be idle to hope for a good year. Nothing is more inimical to the welfare of wild birds than continued rain. It is not that the heaviest downpour will destroy them or even injure the nests; but if the poults follow their mother among long grass the odds are in favour of their being either drowned or strangled. Hence, in all probability, the reason for the very small size of the coveys this year. On the majority of manors it will be well to shoot them sparingly this year.

Mr. Byles is a very persevering individual, as those who are engaged in the pleasing pastime known as Limerick competitions have reason to know. He has once more questioned the Attorney-General as to the legality of these proceedings, and has been successful in causing Sir J. Lawson Walton to modify his opinion in so far as to admit that in some cases at least the prizes for Limericks are chosen haphazard, and that, where this is so, the so-called competition is undoubtedly both a lottery within the statute and a fraud upon the competitors to whom it is represented that the discrimination will be exercised upon a basis of comparative merit. He points out a further consideration as to whether the large sums supplied are, in fact, distributed. The result is that the matter is once more under the consideration of the Commissioners of the Police, and evidently we have not

heard the last of the matter. *The Times*, in commenting upon Sir J. Lawson Walton's reply, says, with much truth, that it would be interesting if some specimens of the skill supposed to be required in making the last line of the Limerick were given. The leading journal doubts very much if there is any difference between inventing the missing line and finding the missing word.

Some interesting matter, under the head of Scientific Investigations, is contained in the second part of the most recent report of the Sea and Inland Fisheries of Ireland. This report is issued by the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland, and deals with one subject, among others, which has not perhaps attracted the attention it deserves from those who are interested in the salmon. This is the extent to which the migration of smolts is affected—in some years it seems to be entirely arrested—by a lack of water in the rivers. We are always seeking reasons to account for the occasional shortage of salmon and sea-trout in certain streams. It is quite possible that the failure of a large proportion of smolts to reach the sea in, say, one or two years in a decade, might do much, in the river where the failure occurred, to account for a corresponding shortage of salmon about the time when the smolts ought to have returned.

The Board of Trade's annual report on railway accidents is an interesting document. It shows that more accidents occurred last year than in any year since 1889, but that these were due entirely to a few calamities. On the whole, railway travelling appears to be one of the safest methods of locomotion as far as the passenger is concerned. The number of railway servants injured, however, is so large as to suggest that the public buys its safety at the cost of danger to those who work the line. On the other hand, the regulations of the Board of Trade are so very severe, and, we might add, so expensive, that unless the loss of life were prevented they would not be endured. Those who hold shares in railways have had many anxious moments recently, because sometimes it has almost appeared as though the profits were about to vanish. Competition keeps down the rates, the trades' unions see that the wages bill is as high as possible and the Board of Trade increases the expense by the number and elaborateness of the precautions it insists upon.

Many journalists have tried to explain away the significance of the figures issued by Sir E. Maunde Thompson, the Director and Principal Librarian of the British Museum. They show a decline in the popularity of this institution, a decline that has been going on steadily for several years, and was very marked in 1906, the year to which the report refers. It shows that the Museum is less attractive in each of its several branches than used to be the case. Fewer people go to see the various collections, fewer readers are to be found studying the old books and fewer students of natural history go to see what Sir E. Ray Lankester has done. The explanation is probably not so difficult to find as some of our contemporaries imagine. There are many things which militate against the usefulness of the British Museum. There is, in the first place, Museum headache, which, from what we gather, is a growing malady. There is also Museum red-tape, which stands very greatly in the way of research. A busy literary worker very often has need to consult authorities possessed by the British Museum, but then he knows that, unless he has at short intervals renewed his reader's ticket, he will not be permitted to enter without formalities involving a considerable loss of time. The directors of the Museum, instead of facilitating research, throw obstacles in its way.

Occasionally a very instructive subject is started by the newspapers as a peg on which to hang letters during the silly season. An instance of this kind is found in the correspondence which has begun about the lack of young men endowed with initiative. The fault indicated belongs equally to the pupils of secondary and of elementary schools. Manufacturers complain, not without reason, that the young man who emerges from Oxford or Cambridge with a fine scholastic record is very often useless for practical purposes. We have a magnificent teaching-machine for those who can afford to enjoy it, but it is not an instrument that develops that faculty of self-reliance which is a young man's greatest inheritance. It is very easy in these days to get a youth capable of carrying out instructions in any department for which he has been trained; but take him away from routine and leave him to his own resources, and the chances are that he will be a failure. This points to a very serious defect in our educational system, and if it be true, as is freely and frequently asserted, that the pupils of German schools are better in this respect than ours, it points to the necessity for a considerable change in our educational system.

A very important place in London was filled by Miss Maria Palmer, whose death was announced the other day. She was the lady superintendent of Alexandra House, an institution created about twenty-one years ago at the instigation of Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales. The object of Her Royal

Highness was to provide a temporary home for Colonial girls arriving in the metropolis without relations or friends with whom to live. One of our merchant princes in the City generously furnished the requisite funds, and Alexandra House was built and named after its patroness. The success attending this venture was largely due to Miss Palmer, who was fifty-four years of age when the undertaking was started. She set to work, however, with right good will, and under her management Alexandra House became a happy and beautiful home for its visitors. There were in it about one hundred students, of whom on an average twenty-five left each term to have their places immediately filled by others. During all the time when she was superintendent her punctuality was as noticeable as her organising power, and she set an example to the girls which they are never likely to forget. We hope that someone will be found worthy to fill her shoes.

Naturally enough, the abnormal rain of the present year has led to a discussion of the reasons for it. Scientific knowledge in this particular is still, we hope, in its infancy, and no absolute explanation of the weather can be given; yet it would seem on the whole the most plausible reason that a cold, wet summer is generally due to the displacements of Polar ice. In this country no doubt can be entertained of the effect of the sea breezes on climate. Anyone who compares the weather in London or Edinburgh with that of places situated in the same latitude in Russia will see at once the effect of being surrounded by sea as contrasted with that resulting from being surrounded by land. This being so, anything that would affect the winds blowing from the sea must naturally produce variations in the temperature of these islands. On the other hand, abnormal weather has always been associated with seismic disturbances, though the relationship between the two has not been theoretically established.

A GARDEN IN VENICE.

There is a garden in a vineyard set
Beneath the spell of Adriatic skies,
A lovely place of dreams and ecstasies,
Of colour tangled in a verdant net,
The shimmer of the low lagoon whose fret
Washes the garden's length and rose that vies
With rose, pomegranate and tall flowers that rise
Above their fellows in one glory met.
And there I think in the still summer night,
When all the world is sleeping save the moon
And the blest nightingale who shuns the noon,
The closed flowers open out of sheer delight
And the white lilies bow their slender stalks,
For through them 'neath the vines Madonna walks.

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

To increase the territory of one's fatherland is, no doubt, a praiseworthy performance, and the French Government shows a peculiar appreciation of it by paying half the cost which individual owners may incur in planting sand-dunes on the coast with marram or with pine, in order at once to consolidate the dune itself into a useful piece of land and also to prevent the "travelling" of the dune, by the sand blowing over land which was previously productive. Journeying through the Llandes, in the South of France, one may begin to form some idea of the extent of soil which France has gained by the protection from the sea afforded by the sand-dunes with their thick growth of the pines which the people tap for their turpentine.

Nottinghamshire has won the championship at cricket. As we write, the counties have not yet completed their season's engagements, but nothing can happen now to deprive the "Lambs" of the title which used to be theirs often enough, but has departed from them of recent years. Their loss of the championship caused no regret, because some ten years ago, or more, the Nottinghamshire players developed a style of cricket that threatened to reduce the game to a dull monotony, which would give pleasure to nobody, neither players nor spectators. However, they have changed their policy, and it is admitted on all sides that they have conducted their campaign this year brilliantly, as well as successfully.

An interesting study, much neglected, is that of the street games of the children in London. The fashions vary in a capricious way, of which it would be interesting if one could learn the reasons. At the present moment a game which is having a great vogue, though it is more suited to the comparatively open country than to the crowded streets, is the game of *Diavolo*, or the "Devil on two sticks." The implements are two short sticks, connected at one end of each with a cord of a few feet in length, and a wooden "devil," in form much like an hour-glass. The object is to set the "devil" revolving on the cord, which is passed under its waist, the player wielding one of the sticks in each hand. When a good speed of revolution has been attained the "devil" can be hurled high into the air and caught again on the cord, still revolving, either by the same

player or by another to whom he throws it. It is said to be the oldest game in the world, a claim which several other games dispute with it; but it is at least curious that it should just at this moment be receiving so much attention from the rising generation, not only in this country, but also, as it seems, in every watering-place along the coasts of France, Belgium and Holland.

"The Stolen White Elephant" was the title of a piece by Mark Twain, who is a humorist; but the stealing of elephants other than white seems to be proceeding in Siam on a scale which the owners of the elephants do not appear to find at all humorous. The industry in which the elephants that are stolen are so largely

used is the teak timber trade, and it has been reported by the British Consul that the thefts are interfering seriously with the profits of the work. An elephant does not sound as if it should be an easy animal to steal, because somewhat difficult to hide; but no doubt Siam gives opportunity for their concealment which would not be found easily in Great Britain. The extent of the trouble may be gauged by the simple figures conveyed by the facts that in a space of a little over a year one firm had twenty-six elephants stolen, of which fourteen were recovered, and another twenty-two stolen and thirteen recovered. The crowning insult appears to have been the stealing of one of the Consul's own transport elephants belonging to the British Government, which has now been missing for nearly a year.

THE CASTING OF FLIES.—I.

THE purpose of these short essays on the gentle craft is to aid the inexperienced, without too severely wearying the attention, of the angler fairly conversant with trout-fishing in ordinary, who is coming for the first, or nearly the first, time into touch with a river on which the dry fly is almost the only lure that can be successful. It may be hoped that reading them may make him more likely to come into

touch with the trout, as well as merely with the water, which is all that a good many touch on their first few introductions to the placid streams on which the dry fly is *de rigueur*.

One of the quaintest and most cynical of clever little books is that entitled "Hints on Angling and Chess." There is much wisdom in it and more wit. One of the best of its maxims is to the effect that "the coarsest fishing when the fish do not see

you is likely to succeed better than the finest when they do." This is almost in the nature of a truism; but truisms have been defined, in the sardonic manner, as truths which are most often forgotten, and this is a case very much in point, for although in conversation in the smoking-room your average angler will wax eloquent on the necessity of denying the fish the privilege, which they appreciate so little, of seeing the fine proportions of your figure, the same angler will go forth on the morrow and conduct himself on the river's bank as though the sight of him would, as, of course, it should, act as a positive attraction on the fish which are therein.

This is said, as the first hint was given, in special reference to trout, and particularly to trout of the clear, placid streams, in which the dry fly has, for the most part, to be used, where you do not "chuck and chance it," but angle for the individual fish which you see rising, keeping, if possible, below him and casting up. It is not always possible. Sometimes the trees and bushes come down so close and thick that there is no room for the most skilful and artistic angler to flick his fly between them over a fish lying above him, and there is no alternative but to go above and let the fly come down over the fish so. Sometimes, to be sure, fish will rise in places so guarded that by no means whatsoever is it possible to offer them the fly; but those "sheerly" impossible fish are wonderfully rare, considering how numerous the difficult fish are—the fish rising where it is just possible, and only just, to give them the fly.

It is especially in streams which are here and there overhung and fringed with trees that this occurs, and these difficulties make as much of the delight of fishing as bunkers of the fearful joy of golf. Every fish so situated presents a different problem, which has to be worked out, of the best possible or the least



M. C. Cottam.

A WINDING BROOK.

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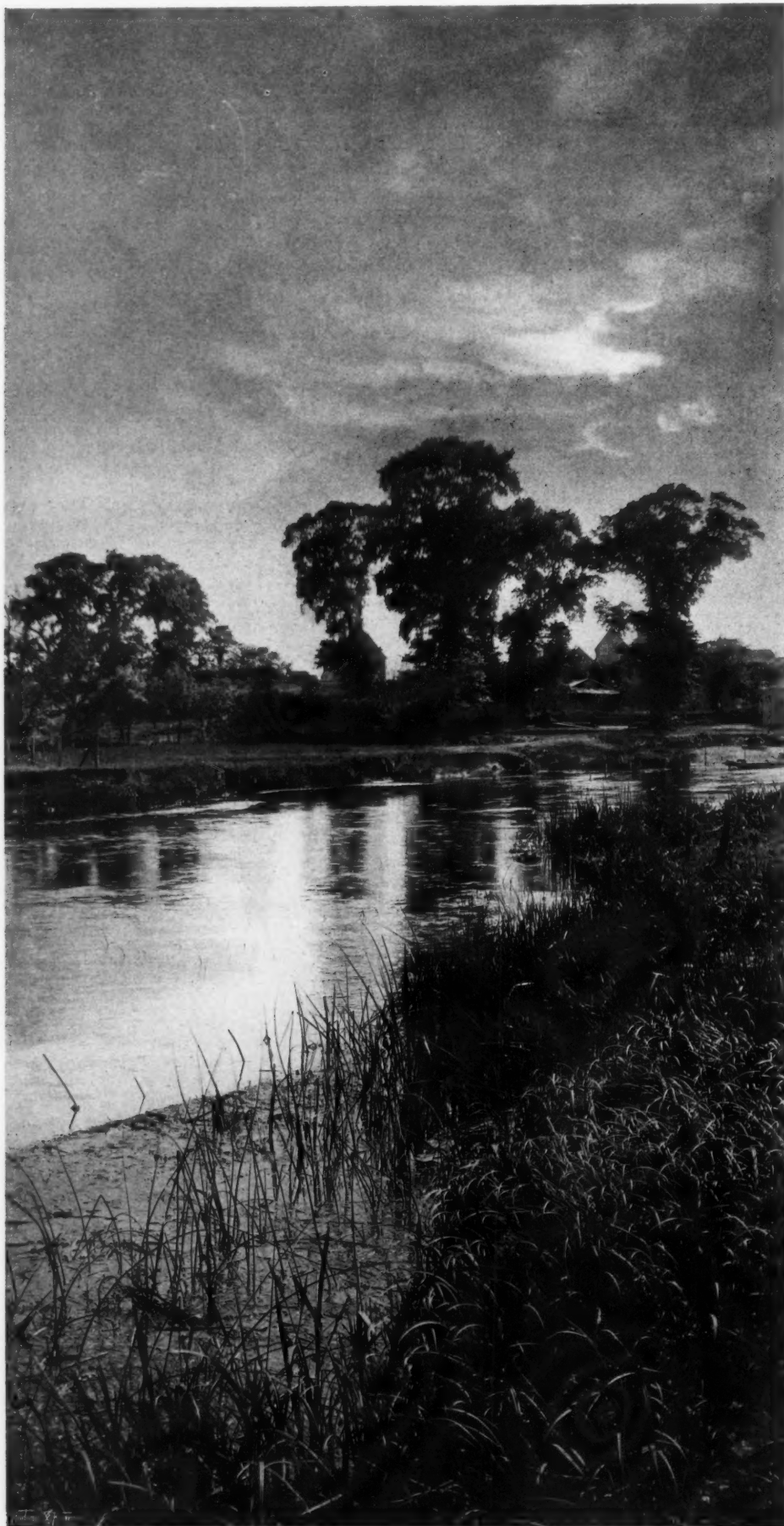
impossible way of approach, and you may always take comfort in the reflection that you have, at all events, one great point in your favour, that nine anglers out of ten will not have the skill to pass their fly over such a fish without previously exhibiting their person to him in an ostentatious way which will take from him all desire for food for the moment. Therefore, if you happen to be the tenth, the skilful artist who can succeed in showing him the fly and concealing yourself and your rod from him the while,

the chances are far more in your favour than if he were a fish lying in an open place where every man who can throw a line at all could put the fly over him. He is nearly sure to be comparatively a poorly-educated fish. No pains, therefore, are wasted which are given to solving the problem of letting him see the fly while you remain unseen. Do not be content with uttering the words of wisdom about the necessity of concealment; act upon them strenuously.

Another of the maxims contained in this delightful little book warns you to look out for the wave which the fish, if you alarm it, will make as it departs in haste from the scene of its late banquet of flies, and adds the memorandum that "it is no use fishing for him after he has gone." This is reinforced by another piece of charming counsel given elsewhere in the same small volume, to the effect that since it is likely that any especially fine trout in a river are known to your brother anglers as well as to yourself, it is good policy, if it should have been your fortune to catch one of these excellent fellows, to reply, when asked, "Where did you catch that fine fish?" that you caught him in a position which we may designate as B, this being one of the places in the river where a good fish is known to lie, whereas, in point of fact, the spot at which you actually did take him was, let us say, A. The effect of this reply is that your enquiring friend may be induced to continue fishing for the trout still supposed to be resident at A, and may leave you undisturbed in your endeavours to make closer acquaintance with the fish which you know still to lie at B. It may be objected that this is a suggestion which requires that another besides the fish at B shall lie, but it is an objection which does not carry all the weight it should with every angler.

The maxim, however, that it is "no use fishing for him after he has gone" is one which, though it applies perfectly, for the moment, to the fish which you have seen indicating his hasty departure by the wave which he raises in the water, does not at all necessarily apply on the morrow either to this fish or even to the one which is "gone" in the sense of the removal from A. For, although that particular fish which you and others have noticed at A has really been transferred to your basket, it is not at all unlikely that on the day following his capture another good trout may have taken his place, for it is very clear from what we are able to note of the habits of these fish that the most desirable lodgings in the river are generally much more limited than the number of those who wish to occupy them. If fine fish lie at A and B, it is because these spots are particularly well suited to their requirements, and when one of them is vacated another trout is usually ready to become its tenant, in succession to the late lamented, and you may take several good fish from precisely the same spot in course of the season. Usually there is the difference that each succeeding fish caught in the same place will be a little smaller than the one before, the biggest fish taking to himself the best lodging in the vicinity and the next biggest in the same part of the river occupying that lodging, when he vacates it, and so on. So in spite of the fish, and others, that lie about A and B, the former spot is not to be neglected, even by you who know that its old tenant is no more.

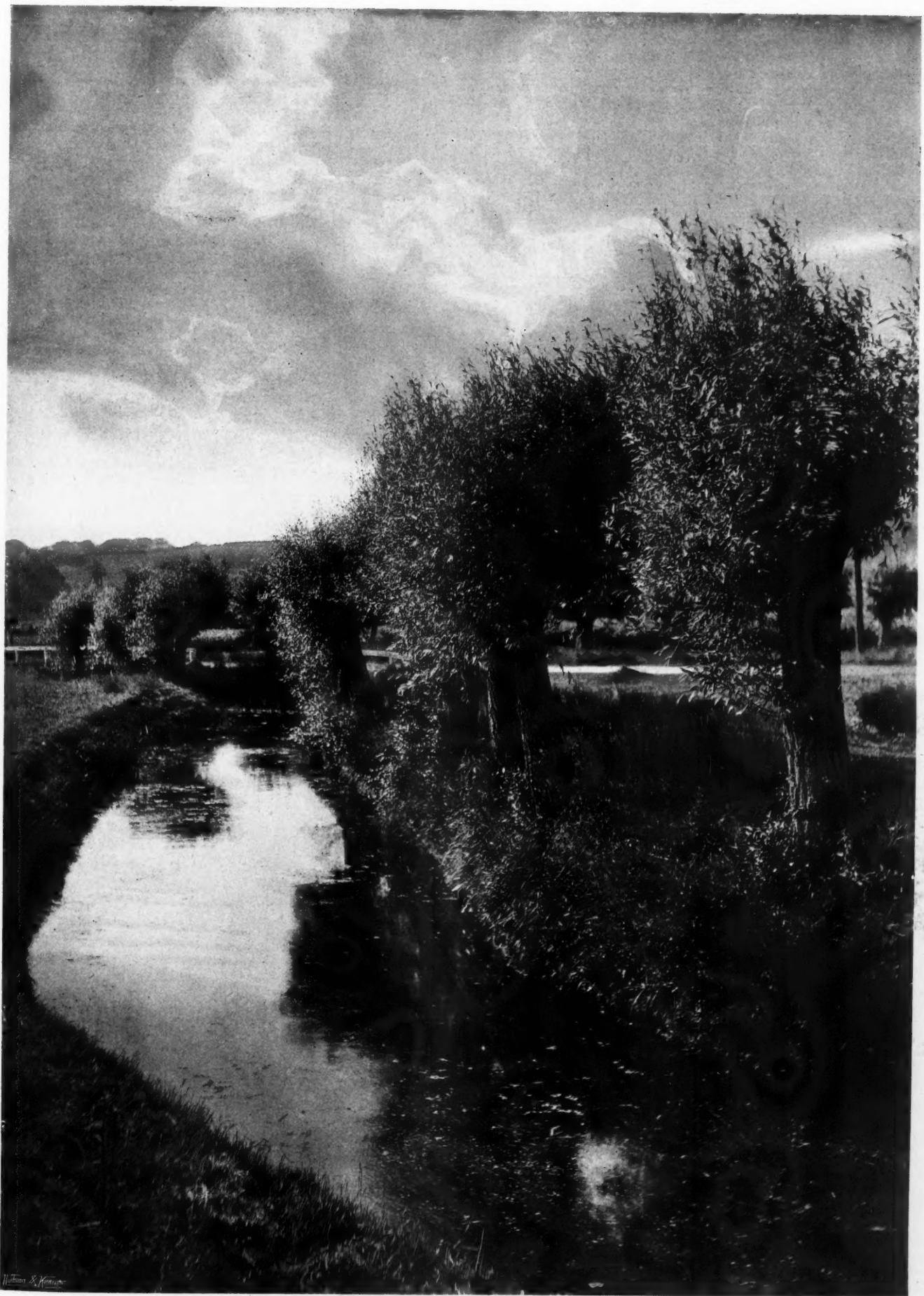
A very little observation of fish will teach you the grammar of the art of concealing yourself from their sight, and your duty must be recognised



M. C. Cottam.

WHERE THE RUSHES QUIVER.

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A BACKWATER.

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to be analogous to that of the skirmisher in action—to take advantage of every possible cover. Naturally enough the fish see you most clearly when your figure is silhouetted out against a clear horizon; but what does not seem so natural and obvious is the effectiveness of what appears the very indifferent screen afforded by a few waving rushes or reeds between you and the river. Probably this flimsy screen is effective because it breaks up and confuses your noble outlines, and makes them indefinite and indistinct. Recognising and taking advantage of this, as the angler should, it is always a confession, to his practised eye, of very indifferent knowledge on the part of the man responsible for cutting the reeds at the side if they be found closely shaved right down to the water's edge. A thin fringe should always be left, where possible, so that the angler, peeping through, as he kneels, at the rising fish which he has marked for

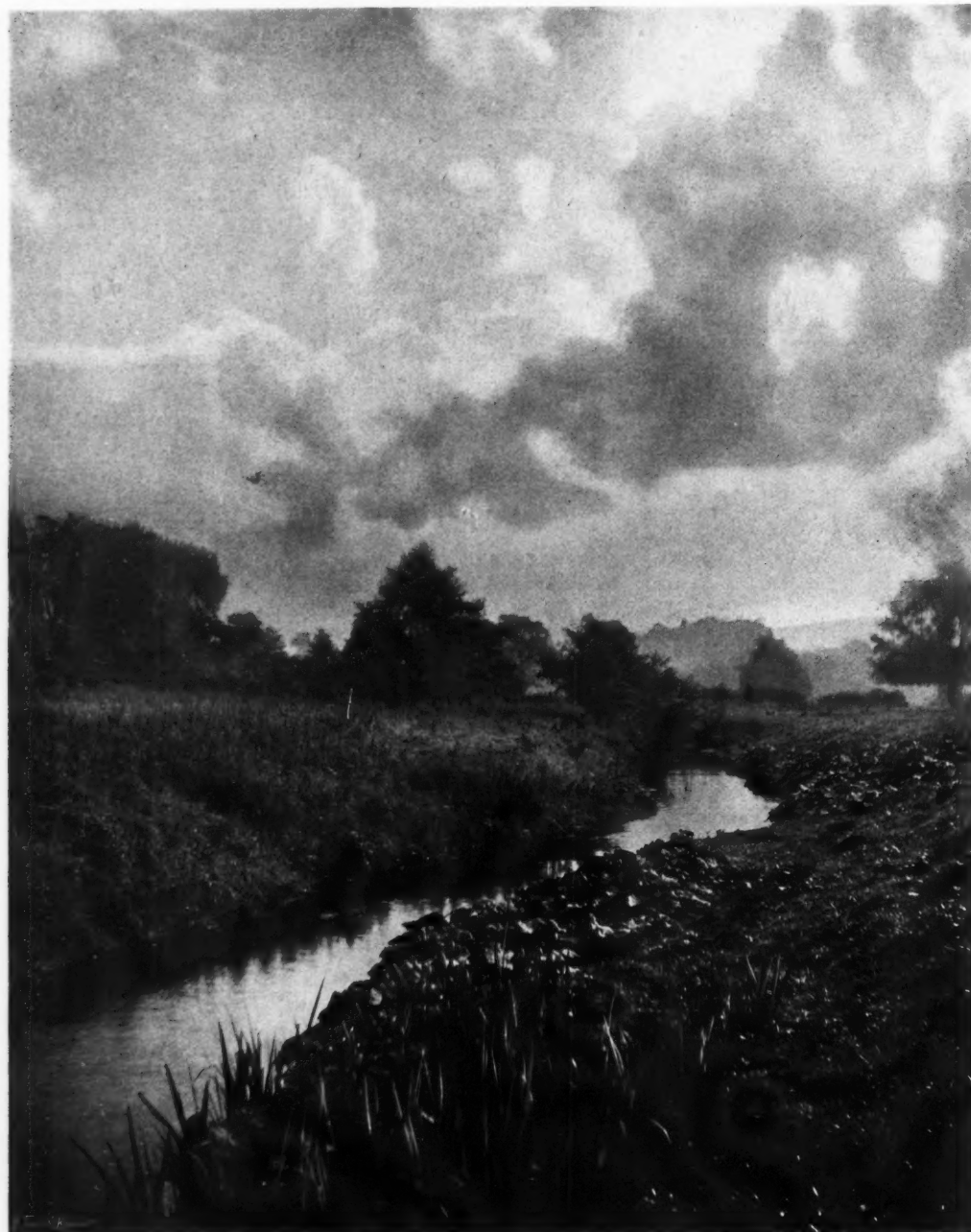
with the abrupt haste which indicates sudden alarm. Even if the watcher be standing in the shade of trees the fish always see him, though, of course, in the full sunlight he becomes conspicuous at a greater range.

FROM THE FARMS.

THE CONDITION OF THE CROPS.

THE official report of crop prospects of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries is not good reading. There was a slight improvement in July, but the boisterous weather of August has knocked the crops about a good deal, and very general anxiety is being felt. Nevertheless, there is some little improvement noticed; wheat may

possibly be an average yield over Great Britain as a whole. It is most promising in the East of Scotland. Barley is not quite so good, but oats are better. Potatoes are the worst crop of the year, and have further deteriorated during the present month owing to the widespread appearance of disease. The haulms seemed to be blighted early in the month, and the disease has extended to the tubers themselves. The best way of dealing with them, no doubt, is to dig them up at once and place them in a pit for winter before further damage is done. Roots have done very well, as might have been expected in such a wet year. They are better in England than in Scotland. Hay is a huge crop, but the quality is generally very poor. Reports as to quality from Scotland are better than in England, but the quantity there is not so satisfactory. A great deal is still out and uncut, and is deteriorating through wet. In regard to garden crops, it is stated that apples and pears are everywhere short. In England plums are so abundant that in many quarters complaint is made that the weight of the fruit has broken down the trees where artificial support had not been given. All sorts of bush fruits have done very well indeed. In Aberdeen strawberries, currants and gooseberries have been good crops. In Banffshire apples and pears are small and late; and in Perth raspberries and strawberries are under average, the former being damaged by wind and rain. Generally, Scotch small fruit appears to have been a good crop, but tree fruits, except plums, under the average. Variable reports have been received from the hop counties. The south-eastern districts appear to promise little short of an average yield, and the outlook in the western districts is favourable. Detailed



M. C. Cottam.

IN THE GLOW OF A JULY SUN.

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his own, may have this natural screen to conceal him. Another aid to concealment which the angler for the shy fish will often do well to use is that which is afforded by a tree stem, or other opaque body, behind him. If he is pressed up against this, so that his silhouette is lost against it, he may regard the fish without their taking the least notice of him, though there is no screen at all between him and them.

Immobility, while the outline is in full view, which serves so well with some animals, so that a hare, for instance, will often run close up before seeing the immovable figure, appears to serve for next to nothing in the case of a trout. When fish are moving up a long pool—as they sometimes will—the experiment may be tried of standing perfectly still and watching them. Fish after fish, as it comes to a certain spot at which the watcher's figure becomes visible, will turn and dart off down stream again

accounts show that in Kent hops have improved, but are backward; they are not so generally affected with vermin as last year. The reports as to yield vary, one predicting an average crop, others moderate and under average crops. In Hants mould and aphids are reported among the hops, and warmth and sunshine are needed. In Sussex the crop is reported freer from insect pests than usual. One report says: "Hops are backward, but promise an average yield at present." In Surrey hops promise an average crop; in Worcester the crop is late, but promising; in Hereford hops have improved, have plenty of bine, are fairly free from blight and are showing well for an abundant crop.

AUTUMN DUCKLINGS.

The Christmas poultry market is but scantily supplied with ducks, and for what there are prices rule high. There is a simple

explanation for this—it does not pay to “summer” ducks like goslings, which are, in many cases, forced to find their own living in the summer and fattened on the stubble in the autumn. But ducks frequently lay in late August and September, and if these eggs are set, broods which will realise good prices at the end of the year can be raised. As a rule, ducks moult earlier than hens; they cease to lay in June, and then proceed to shed their feathers. At this stage they need very little feeding, provided they have a free range; but as they get over the moult they should be fed more liberally and a little meat given them daily. This can be served in various forms, but the simplest is to buy one of the “meat meals” on the market, which consist of granulated meat. This can be dissolved in boiling water and added to the soft food. This treatment will produce eggs if the ducks belong to a tolerable laying strain. The breed should be Pekin; they lay better than most Aylesburys; the smaller breeds, by the way, like Indian Runners, are useless for the Christmas market, there is no demand for small ducklings then, the birds must belong to the market breeds. If there are two drakes not more six ducks should run with them; both ducks and drakes should be last year’s birds. The eggs should be tested as there is always risk of infertility, far more so than in the spring. The ducklings, which should be hatched under hens, should be treated in the ordinary way, that is, started on biscuit meal, and continuing with that, boiled rice and greaves. A dry shed is necessary, for the weather will be damp and young ducklings cannot stand damp under foot, in fact, it would be well to treat them in the Aylesbury fashion, keeping them entirely under cover except at meal time; they will not grow quite so fast as those hatched in the spring, but at three months old should be a good size if the feeding and management are good. The trouble is not so much to get the eggs as to get fertile ones at this season of the year, but giving the stock ducks meat will, in all probability, produce them.

THE KERRY COW.

An interesting discussion has been raised in the council of the Kerry and Dexter Society in regard to closing the Herd Book to bulls that are not the offspring of registered animals. From a

breeding standpoint a good deal can be said in favour of this, as an ill-bred bull, however well he may look, is constantly in danger of getting stock that will cast back to some of his ill-favoured ancestors. It takes several generations to fix a type of cattle, and societies are not well advised when they admit to the Herd Book animals which only look like good examples of the breed. There is every reason for desiring to keep the Kerry pure. It is the smallest of our native cattle, and fills a place in the household which no other exactly fits, while its merits for crossing purposes are too well known to need attention being called to them. We trust that those who have the direction of the policy of the society will continue to exert the utmost care to keep the breed pure and small.

THE SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.

This measure passed the House of Lords late on Saturday. It received a benediction from the Marquess of Ripon and Lord Carrington, and met with no serious opposition on the part of their opponents. At any rate, the second reading was agreed to without a division. The concluding debate centred on three points. The first was that a Bill, which was described by the Prime Minister as the most ambitious and greatest change in the agricultural system which any country had brought forward in recent years, should have come to the House of Lords so late in August. If that were the case the measure was deserving of longer consideration than it received, but a discount for exaggeration must be allowed. The defects of the measure are two in number, one being the subordination of the local authorities to the Central Department at Whitehall. The second blot lies in the unfairness of the terms under which owners of land are to be compelled to hire it. The owner must, if necessary, grant a lease that is practically perpetual, while the tenant may get rid of his agreement at certain stated intervals. Such were the main objections brought forward to the Bill; but, as we said on its appearance, the measure is on the whole a satisfactory one, and we have no doubt, now that there is a fair prospect of its becoming law, that all who are concerned will unite, as far as possible, to secure its effective working.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

FEW careers exhibit the possibilities of romance in modern times so vividly as that of the Empress Eugénie, whose life history is told by Philip W. Sergeant in *The Last Empress of the French* (Werner Laurie). She was born in 1826, just five years after Napoleon Bonaparte had expired at St. Helena. On her father's side she was connected with some of the greatest Spanish families, and on her mother's with the Scottish house of Kirkpatrick. But though their ancestry was high, the immediate condition of her parents was of the poorest. Her father was a colonel of artillery, wearing a black patch over his eye and twelve years the senior of his wife, the daughter of a wine merchant. She herself had assisted in the retail branch of the trade, and “being possessed of a great share of the beauty which made her daughter so famous, she was no doubt an attraction to visitors.” This is Mr. Sergeant's language, and the plain meaning of it is that, despite her long pedigree, she was in the position of an attractive barmaid. No wonder that the friends of the colonel, who was also Count of Teba, were strongly opposed to the match. On his side, the marriage appears to have been one of love; on hers, one of interest. They had three children, of whom one, a boy, died young. Maria Francesca, afterwards Duchess of Alba, was the elder, and Eugénie, the subject of this study, was the second-born. In 1834, through the death of his brother, the colonel became Count of Montijo and heir to a considerable fortune. Husband and wife did not get on well together. He was retiring in his habits and frugal to the verge of parsimony; she was gay and lavish, musical, fond of society, devoted to the theatre. Of the future Empress we know that Washington Irving dandled her on his knee while on a visit to Granada, and that she received much attention from her mother's friend Prosper Mérimée. In reality, there is very little recorded of her early girlhood or her education in England which possesses significance. The first individual picture of her that we get is after her sister's marriage, when she was an unmarried and reckless young lady in the Spanish Court. At least three Dukes were suggested, at various times, as having affected her—Alcanizes, Sesto and Ossuna. Some said that a Spanish Grandee would be afraid to risk such originality in a wife, for people, at least, talked of her riding in the streets of Madrid on a fiery bare-backed horse, with a cigarette in her mouth; of her appearance in brilliant Andalusian costumes at bull-fights, with not a fan but a whip in her hand and a dagger in her belt, with red satin boots on her feet and flowers and jewels in the broad golden plaits of her hair; of her presentation,

in the rôle of Queen of Beauty, of the prize to the most successful toreador; of her swimming feats and her fencing. Again the chroniclers have recourse to the effect on her disposition of the shock preceding her sister's marriage to explain these extravagances. Such explanation is unnecessary. Eugénie de Guzman (it was not until she began to live in Paris that she came to be called Eugénie de Montijo) was not the first woman who rode a bare-backed horse, swam, fenced or even (if she did so) smoked. From early days she had given signs of what is known as a “tomboy” disposition, and a love of mischief persisted in later in life. The influence of her mother, herself reckless in her conduct, though in a less athletic and, perhaps, less innocent manner, was not of a kind to restrain the daughter's unconventionality, which can easily be understood to have created some stir among the ladies of Spain. How she came to marry Napoleon III. is an intricate and obscure story. There is abundance of evidence that she was mixed up in many love affairs. While Maid of Honour at the Court of Queen Isabella she and her mother, too, were deprived of their posts for taking an evening walk with a young Court official. Prince Napoleon, the son of King Jerome, and the Plon-plon of future ridicule, appears at one time to have been infatuated with her charms and to have meditated a proposal. For her match-making mother nourished very high ambitions. The deciding event was probably her letter to him before the *coup d'état* of 1851, putting all her fortune at his disposition. Napoleon himself does not cut a very enviable figure. He was *lié* at the time with Miss Howard, whose purse defrayed his expenses, and he fully recognised that the exigencies of his position made it desirable that he should marry into one of the Royal families. The list of those who were possible was long. It is said that he would have preferred his cousin Mathilde; but although she was separated from her profligate husband, the Church of Rome refused to grant her a divorce. There were negotiations about his marrying the Princess Carola, but they were broken off by her family. Approaches were made to the Princess Adelaide of Hohenlohe; according to Greville her reply was very civil, but she declined on account of her youth, and not feeling equal to such a position. Under these circumstances it is difficult to exonerate him from a charge of bad faith. The sequel to the Miss Howard episode may as well be told: “He did not discard her entirely until he had actually received the title of Emperor, and then he made her Countess of Beauregard, with a château of that name near St. Cloud, and repaid her abundantly for the financial aid which she had given

him. His marriage, nevertheless, made an enemy of her. "She could have forgiven him a princess," was her scornful comment. To show that she did not forgive his actual choice, she took pains to appear in public as much as she could where she was likely to encounter the Emperor and Empress. Her hostility continued until her death twelve years later, an event which it is perhaps hardly surprising to hear did not cause Napoleon III. to exhibit much grief." Nowhere is the weakness in Napoleon's character more apparent than in the studied speech which on the occasion of his marriage was made to the assembled Senate, Legislation Body and Council of State. The passage which by his tactlessness gave most offence was that in which he referred to himself as having taken up "in the face of Europe" the position of a *farvenu*. However, Mr. Sergeant sticks to his subject and does not concern himself overmuch with an analysis of Napoleon III.'s character and temperament. There is no doubt that his wife filled the high position of Empress with great dignity. Her life at the Tuileries is rapidly sketched by the author. The Emperor was very much engrossed in his own work, which kept him away from his wife. She, in the early morning, read the newspapers carefully, especially the reports of political debates. After *déjeuner* the Emperor smoked a cigarette in his wife's workroom, and then retired to his own apartments. When he had gone Eugenie sat down every day and wrote a letter to her mother. After that she had an interview with her private secretary, Damas-Hinard, "a thin smiling old man with scanty white hair, dressed always in black, with a white tie." It was his business to bring her the innumerable petitions sent daily. Into these she went personally, and was generous in her response to all who seemed deserving. Occasionally she would drive to the address of her correspondent, making personal enquiries into the merits of the case. Both she and the Emperor spent vast sums on charity, not only responding to begging letters, but giving freely to hospitals and similar institutions. In addition to Damas-Hinard she had one or two other curious people about her. One was M. de Saint-Albin, her careless and shabby librarian, who wore clothes dating from the reign of Louis Philippe, but who was famous for his literary judgment. Another was the Countess Wagner de Pons, a former beauty, who still, in her seventh decade, dressed in the latest fashion and esteemed a compliment from her mistress. She usually wore a bright brown wig, but one day she came out in fair hair dressed in the Greek style. At two

o'clock in the afternoon the Empress drove in the Bois, bowing on every side in answer to salutations and coming back in time to dress for dinner. At this meal the number was usually fourteen. Rigid etiquette was maintained, but the service was so good that the meal did not last more than three-quarters of an hour. In regard to dress the Empress Eugénie set the fashion, and it has been made a charge against her that she set a pernicious example of luxury. So far as this was true, however, it related to the number and not to the expensiveness of her dresses, as she told Dr. Evans at Farnborough that she did not spend more than 1,500fr. on a dress, and in a letter to an American friend in 1906 that only three times in her life did she wear a dress that cost her as much as fourteen guineas, one being her wedding dress and another her costume at the baptism of the Prince Imperial. She seems, however, to have cleared out her wardrobe twice a year, and reconstructed it, giving her old dresses to her women, who sold them for good prices in America. In general her taste was good, but it cannot be forgotten that she invented that monstrosity the crinoline. She also gave to the world of fashion Garibaldi blouses, coloured under-skirts and hair nets. Her biographer says cautiously that "possibly also she was the inventor of the lift communicating with the Empress's dressing-room on one floor of the Tuileries and with rooms containing her wardrobes on the floor above. It was customary for her waiting-women to dress in the costume proposed for the Empress one of four *mannequins* modelled on her figure and to send it down in the lift. Eugénie could thus see herself before as others would see her later and transfer the clothes from the model to her own person. Needless to say, this dressing-room mystery, when revealed to the eyes of ex-Imperial Paris, provoked derision and abuse." As she advances in life the facts of her biography become more familiar to the English reader. Everybody knows the encomium passed on her by Queen Victoria. The tale of the Franco-Prussian War and the part she played in it is still of yesterday, and will ever form a sad chapter in the history of France. The death of the Prince Imperial, too, is an event too raw and recent to need comment, and the biographer very properly draws a veil over her life when she enters into the privacy of Chislehurst. It has been a stirring and active career, and shows that romance is as possible in these late days as it was in the time of Guinevere and the other great ladies of King Arthur's Court.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

MARTINS BY THE SEA.

HOUSE-MARTINS, although they often nest in cliffs by the sea, are much more frequently associated with meadows, lanes and villages than they are with the shore-line. Even the wanderer by the seashore has not often the opportunity of witnessing a spectacle seen by me a few days since while occupied in prawning. It was nearing low tide, on a still, warm day, and over the gentle wavelets lapping at the edge of the tide many scores of martins were to be seen busily engaged in hawking minute insects just above the salt water. It was the prettiest sight in the world, and the graceful flight of these birds was never more charmingly displayed. There must have been some happy combination of atmosphere to account for the abundance of food which thus attracted the flight; and although I am, in the course of my wanderings, not seldom by the seashore, I cannot often recall so large a gathering of house-martins hawking thus at the edge of the tide.

SCOTERS NESTING IN BRITAIN.

Numerous as is the common scoter in British seas, especially in winter, when many parts of the Channel and North Sea are black with them, instances of the nesting of this bird in these islands are not very common. Last year the interesting fact of a pair of scoters rearing their young successfully on an Irish lough was established by Major H. Trevelyan. This year, at least, one instance of the nesting of this bird has been reported from Sutherland. Sutherland, Caithness and Ross-shire seem to be almost the only counties in Britain where the scoter cares to attempt to rear her young. A pair will now and again nest in the Hebrides; but even in those remote parts of the kingdom such instances are not very frequent. Whence, then, are recruited those vast armies of these birds which appear upon our seas in winter? Principally, it would seem, in North Russia, Siberia and the northern parts of Scandinavia, where in vast, unpeopled wildernesses the "black duck" is enabled to rear its sooty brood, near fresh-water lakes, in absolute tranquillity. In these lonely haunts the scoter and a thousand other birds are likely to be able to nest in undisturbed seclusion for generations yet to come.

RAVENS IN THE FAR NORTH.

Few hardier feathered creatures are to be found than the bird of Odin, now, thanks to the advances of civilisation and the enmity of shepherds and keepers, so scarce in Britain. The raven's ability to maintain existence even in such frozen regions of the earth as Greenland and Alaska is simply amazing. The most rigorous climate seems to have no terrors for these birds, and in so inhospitable a region as Greenland their cunning resource and strength of constitution enable them to support life without much difficulty. To the trappers of these Northern countries the bird is particularly obnoxious, for the reason that it often robs their snares of the rarer Arctic foxes, whose skins become yearly more precious and more valuable. The raven's keen appetite is satisfied with almost every conceivable kind of fare,

from the flesh of dead reindeer and musk oxen to fish of all sorts, the refuse of the seashore, various birds, such as little auks and guillemots, hares, young seals, dead whales and other food. Its plenty in these Northern haunts is amazing. I was talking not long since to a well-known big-game-hunter, who was shooting last fall in the Yukon Country. One morning he went out to look for a wolf or bear at the carcass of a caribou which had been killed over-night. As he approached, quite a cloud of ravens rose from the carcass, on which they had been feasting. A black wolf in splendid coat, which happened to be engaged in the same operation, was less wary than the feathered plunderers, and fell a victim to the bullet of the sportsman. In Greenland the raven seems to breed mainly about the fjords and coast-line.

THE PRICE OF A WILD CAT.

Before the middle of the last century, St. John, in his "Wild Sports of the Highlands," speaks of the increasing scarcity of the British wild cat, even in its natural home among the mountain fastnesses of the North. Not long since, at Stevens's Sale Rooms in London a stuffed wild cat obtained in Inverness-shire during the present year was sold for no less a sum than £2 15s. With such a price on its head, and with the hand of every keeper against it, it is almost wonderful that this animal can maintain existence at all. In the days when they were more plentiful than they are now, wild cats were always much more easily trapped than foxes. They seem to have much less suspicion and will take a bait far more readily than that extremely cute animal *Canis vulpes*. The wild cat is, I suppose, now completely extinct in England. When, actually, the last survivor was slain, is hard to say. So far back as 1853 Lord Ravensworth is believed to have shot one of the very last of English wild cats at Eslington, Northumberland. These animals attained in far-off times the dignity of being associated with the fox, hare and marten in charters granting hunting rights over forest land. Turberville, writing in 1575, thus speaks of them when happened upon by hounds in chase: "They make a noble trye for the time that they stand up. At last, when they may no more, they will take a tree, and therein seek to beguile the hounds. But if the hounds hold into them, and will not so give it over, then they leap from one tree to another and make great shift for their lives, with no less pastime to the huntsman." A wild cat at bay is one of the most ferocious beasts in the world, and will fly straight at a man's throat without a moment's hesitation. St. John gives a personal instance of such an encounter.

SOME OCEAN BIRDS.

Few birds give one a more complete idea of ease and confidence, even in the stormiest seas, than the shearwaters, a group of the petrels which may be described as perfect masters of the salt water. The gannet, it is true, revels in the roughest phases of ocean life, and, far away from land and amid the wildest storms, pursues its career with splendid ease and confidence. Yet even the gannet, powerful as is its flight and wonderful its mastery of wave and weather, is not, I think, a more finished performer at sea than are the

shearwaters. During a recent voyage down the North-West Coast of Africa and through the Canaries and Madeiras, I had many opportunities of watching various species of these birds, especially the great shearwater (*Puffinus gravis*) and its near ally *P. kuhli*, the Manx shearwater (*P. anglorum*), the Levantine shearwater (*P. yelkonanus*), as well as the curious little dusky shearwater (*P. assimilis*), a somewhat diminutive species, measuring little more than 10in. in length. The great shearwater is a much bigger bird, reaching 19in., while the Manx shearwater measures about 15in. These are all included among "British birds," though only the Manx shearwater is really familiar along our coast-line, breeding as it does on Lundy Island, the coast of Wales, the Scillies, in the Hebrides, the Orkneys and Shetlands and on various parts of the coast of Ireland. The great shearwater is not nearly so well known, and approaches our coast-line much less frequently. Still, fishermen on the West Coast of Ireland know the bird pretty familiarly, and occasionally take it on their hooks. The Levantine and the little dusky shearwaters are much rarer British species, and but few instances of their occurrence have been noted.

SHEARWATERS AT SEA.

The shearwaters are to be seen in perfection on the deep ocean of the North Atlantic—the "blue water" of sailor-men—where, whether the sea

be smooth or stormy, they are equally at home. There are few more wonderful things in the great gallery of Nature than the ease, the power and the grace with which these birds command the elements. To watch them when the west winds blow hard and the sea is troubled is a revelation. The rougher the gale the more perfectly is their command of wind and wave exhibited. The marvellous deftness with which they skim, wheel and turn about the surface of the waves, evading always any rough contact with the water, is truly admirable. Their twists and turns upon the wind are wonderfully dexterous, and in the fiercest gale they are absolutely at home. The shearwater's skimming flight just above the surface of the waves is continued for long periods, and the onlooker may watch for hours before he can distinguish the beat of wings. The bird prefers, apparently, to adjust its flight to the breeze by a shift of the wing. Shearwaters prey chiefly on surface fish, cuttle-fish, any animal food they can pick up and offal. The great shearwater makes a big splash when he dives, but seems to have little difficulty in procuring the food of which he is in pursuit. The nesting-place of this species is not yet identified, but is believed to be among the islands of the Southern Ocean. Its near congener, *Puffinus kuhli*, nests on the Desertas, near Madeira, as does the little dusky shearwater. Great Salvage Island and the De Verde Islands are also nesting-places of this last-named shearwater.

H. A. B.

THE OLD ENGLISH SHEEPDOG.

THE cult of the Old English sheepdog is certainly on the increase, and the wonder to all who are acquainted with this dog is that it did not catch the public favour long ago. The breed has many claims to popularity, not one of the least being its appearance, which is very picturesque.

It is one of the handsomest of our dogs. In temper it is most docile, and its intelligence is of a very high order. Not only can it be trained to work as a herd dog, but also to retrieve, and with very little trouble becomes quite a sportsman's friend. As a domestic dog it is a great favourite. The breed cannot be classed as modern, for it can be traced over 120 years back. The illustration given is a reproduction of one of Gainsborough's canvases, which was painted about the middle of the eighteenth century. It is a portrait of one of the Dukes of Buccleuch, who is holding a sheepdog in his arms. The dog's resemblance to the bobtail of to-day is very striking. Opinions differ as to where the breed originated. It is claimed by Wales and Hampshire, while some hold that it is a descendant of the Scottish bearded collie, and true it is that the two breeds have many points of similarity.

The Old English sheepdog first came into prominence about forty years ago, and from that time it has made rapid strides in the public favour. A good specimen of the modern breed should measure about 23in. in height, though the bitches

are naturally somewhat smaller. The average weight of a dog should be somewhere near 75lb., while the bitch is correspondingly lighter. In the bobtail one of the most important points is coat, the general opinion being that in colour it must be either grey, grizzle, blue, or blue marled, with or without white markings, or white with these colours as relief. The growth should be very plentiful, of harsh texture, long and shaggy, but free from any suspicion of curling.

There are two coats, as in the collie—an upper and an under—and this combination forms a natural protection from rain, thus fitting him for the sphere in which Nature intended he should live and work, on the wild hills and exposed sheep pastures. Admirers of this charming breed who wish their dog to possess an ideal coat cannot do better than allow him to live as much as possible in the open air. This will do more to bring about the desired result than all the hair producers resorted to by the unknowing. The coat must be kept clean if it is to make healthy growth, but this will not be effected by washing too frequently, as that has a tendency to soften the hair. Keep it clean by regular and vigorous brushing. A small dandy brush is best for this purpose. Care should always be taken to brush the hair against the grain, *i.e.*, the way it naturally falls. Do not be afraid of using the brush too much, for that is well-nigh impossible.



THE FIFTH DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH BY GAINSBOROUGH.



Fall.

BRENIWOOD BLUE BELLE.

Copyright.

The eye is another very important feature. It should be small and either dark in colour or of the type known as wall-eyed. The latter is now somewhat rare, and on that account is very much desired by many breeders.

The head of a typical specimen is a study. The skull should be large and inclined to squareness, the part above the eyes being arched and well covered with hair; the jaw must be of good length, though not too long, strong and square; the nose should be large and black in colour; the teeth must be large and strong and should not overlap; the ears must be small and carried flat by the side of the head, and have only a moderate covering of hair; the neck of a good bobtail should be of fair length with a graceful curve and plenty of coat; the shoulders must slope and be narrow at the points; the formation of the body should be short and compact, the ribs well sprung, while the brisket must be deep and large; the loins must be thick and gently arched, the hind quarters round and very muscular, with well-let-down hocks; the hind quarters should be covered with long hair, growing more thickly than on any other part of the body; the fore legs must be quite straight, with plenty of good, thick bone; let the feet be small with thick pads.



Fall.

ROSEBERY.

Copyright.

The bobtail in his movements is not exactly like any other dog. When running his action is free and elastic, but in walking his step is ambling; in fact, not unlike that of the bear. The pups when born are not all tailless, and it is no uncommon thing to find some of a litter with tails, while others lack them. When a pup is born with a tail it must be docked as soon as he is strong enough, and not more than 2in. of the stump left. The breed develops very late, and is at its best when between three and five years old.

One of the best kennels of Old English sheepdogs is that owned by Mrs. Sidney Charter of Brentwood. She has only been in the fancy about five years, but has in that time attained great success, both as a breeder and an exhibitor. In reviewing the dogs in this kennel, pride of place must be given to Champion Brentwood Country Girl, a beautiful blue-grey, with white markings. She is unquestionably the best bitch living, and some experts think the best ever benched. Her record in the show-ring is a marvellous one. Nine championships stand to her credit, while her total wins number over 300, many of which have been gained in large variety classes. In the ring she can afford to give something to her rivals, and often does, for many of her victories have been won when she was dead out of coat. She is now about three and a-half years old and at her best. Her owner refused £200 for her before she



T. Fall. MR. & MRS. CHARTER & THEIR PRIZE-WINNERS.

Copyright.

was two years old. Another good bitch is Brentwood Blue Belle, a sister to the last named. She is a pigeon blue, with white markings, and owns a wealth of coat of the right texture. She has a very short back and is a perfect mover. Her record on the show bench runs to nearly 100 prizes, including the championship at Manchester this year.

Brentwood May Girl is a blue with white markings. She is one of the biggest bitches now being shown. Her coat is good, and her legs and feet are of the best. She is a late developer, and consequently has not been shown much; but at five shows she has won sixteen prizes. When she matures, she will do a lot of winning. Shepton Hero is the best young dog seen for years, and must have a great future, both as a show and stud dog. He was bred by Messrs. Tilly, and is by Lord Cedric out of Analon Lass. His colour is a beautiful blue-grey, with white head. He has a very short back and immense bone. His coat, legs, feet and movements are perfect. Being a young dog, he has not been shown much, but has already won nearly fifty prizes, including two championships and the Leopold Roper Challenge Cup, valued at 50 guineas, for the best of any variety at the Beckenham Show.

No article on this kennel or on the Old English sheepdog would be complete without some notice of Rosebery, who has made a great name as a sire and has also done well in the show-ring. He has won many firsts and specials,

including that for the best dog in the show. His coat, legs and feet are good, while his skull and bone are probably the largest in the fancy. As a stud dog he is perhaps unequalled, and among many winners who own him as their sire is Champion Brentwood Country Girl. At many shows sire and daughter have carried away the much-coveted brace trophies. Among other winners at the Brent House kennels are Brentwood Rajah, Brentwood Cherry Girl, Fair Helen and Johnny Boy. The last named is the housedog—a great pet—who (so his mistress declares) can do everything but speak. Mrs. Charter has also several good puppies which promise to keep up the high reputation of the kennels.

H. BOYCOTT ODDY.

WHERE THE SEA • • RUNS DRY.

It is the time of spring tides, and the opportunity must be taken or lost, for we know that these wait for no man. So shallow is the channel between two islands off the South Coast of England that the sea runs out entirely at this season, leaving a moist expanse of seaweed, sand and rocks, interspersed with numerous pools of every size and shape. This rare condition of mixed land and water affords a morning's amusement of considerable and amphibian interest. After breakfast a party sets forth, some clothed in sea-boots, some in mere stockings and shoes, regardless of a soaking. Various implements are carried: two long sticks, armed with miniature gaffs for capturing eels of too great dimensions for handling, a shrimp-net, sticks of all kinds and numerous baskets to hold the bag. The tide is falling rapidly, and already an island—some half-mile out—is visibly growing in area. Towards this the expedition is directed in a stout boat of considerable width of beam, and a pull of some minutes terminates abruptly on a sunken piece of rock. The passengers alight, some in the water, though others are successful in keeping comparatively dryshod by means of agile leaps from one projecting stone to another; but such a precaution avails not for long, and, in one or two instances, merely leads to premature immersion of more than unavoidable ankle-deep paddling involves, through a misplaced foot, an unstable stepping-stone, or a slippery bit of seaweed. But the day is warm, likewise the elements, while sea-water hurts no one so long as chills are not caught by standing about—and there is little chance of this. The game begins with the endeavours of novices to the sport to capture various sized conger eels, which lurk in fancied and accustomed security under every rock. Those rocks of manageable bulk are overturned with some care, to prevent clouding the water, and a whole aquarium of fish and vegetable life is disclosed; limpets, seaweeds and anemones adorn the under-surface of each stone, shrimps, prawns and crawfish wriggle and dart away, crabs of all sizes and stages of soft or hard "shelledness" creep deeper into their crevices, all sorts of watery creatures, resenting the intrusion, strive to secure some safer refuge; but in nearly every case a more or less lengthy and slim form makes off with a splashing and squirming movement for the deeper water. This is the desired conger. The fingers of an expert seize him with no uncertain grip behind the head, and, knocking the back of that portion of his anatomy on a rock, cast him, still wriggling, into one of the baskets; but that is the proper way to accomplish this feat, and needs both experience and quickness. The unpractised performer, having observed the unerring ease of the expert, attempts to emulate this success with vastly different results. Seizing the creature is simplicity itself, but merely the beginning of an interesting comedy for the spectators. A few wriggles suffice to set the captive free again, and he slithers off, head above water, for the safety of the deeper channel. Another frantic grab only yields a momentary grip of an elusive tail, and, filled now with righteous indignation at such unworthy methods of evasion, together with a stern determination not to be defeated by so insignificant a foe, the would-be captor follows with incautious celerity. One foot goes unheeded into a small pool of unsuspected depth, the resultant splashing being unnoticed in the thrilling excitement of the chase, while the other, landing on the slope of a seaweed-coated stone, completes the unwary one's downfall in another pool waiting conveniently to receive his face. But the effort has not been entirely vain, for both hands now grasp the enemy with the power of a Sandow, and, though his eely squirming takes all the captor's attention, he is held long enough for a shout of "Chuck it down on to a rock" to be obeyed. The blow paralysing the



T. Fall.

COUNTRY GIRL.

Copyright.



T. Fall.

MAY GIRL.

Copyright



T. Fall.

SHEPTON HERO.

Copyright

creature's muscles, he is despatched and duly basketed. Similar episodes have been in course of development all round, though not all with the ultimate triumph of that we have been attending. Some of the performers have met even deeper pools, and hands suffer from contact with points of rock as sharp as needles; but such accidents only serve to stimulate, and remove the last scruple regarding clothes and dryness.

Occasionally a shout announces the discovery of some comparative levathan, weighing perhaps 5lb., and the small gaffs must be requisitioned, as these monsters are big enough to bite, and possess by no means negligible teeth. The baskets fill rapidly, for nearly every stone has its eel sheltering in fancied safety till the returning tide brings relief. The heavier rocks require a combined effort to move them, and generally yield quarry in proportion; while another variety of eel, smaller and of a different shape, known as "whistlers," often share these ampler quarters. At intervals a crab is found worth keeping, and prawns can be scooped out if you are quick enough. Before the tide has quite run out, when a specially large rock has to be moved, it is necessary to form a circle on the seaward side, and watch carefully, or a goodly conger may escape unobserved, and the net may be useful here. More than once, in the agitation caused by looking at unskilful dabs at departing eels, a stone has slipped from supporting fingers to descend to its resting-place with an all-embracing splash. So the game goes on and the baskets fill. But the tide has now gone, and on every side a bare expanse meets the eye, save where, in mid-channel, a narrow waterway remains. A new amusement now commences. A long line is formed, and pursuit of fresh prey, in the shape of "scollops," displaces eel-hunting for the moment.

With violent clapping of hands, the line advances slowly, keeping careful watch all round. To the uninitiated this appears to be some weird new form of insanity which has suddenly seized the whole party, but eventually its object is made manifest. Some 50yds. in front a column of water is spouted a few feet into the air, and those in the line nearest to the place make a rush for it. A guileless and misguided scollop, disturbed by the noise, has suddenly shut itself up, ejecting in the process some salt water, which betrays its whereabouts. Larger crabs can also be discovered out here, and quite a varied assortment of "game" is accounted for. The line has broken up into detachments, each intent on some particular adventure, while scollops squirt in all directions. An old boatman, armed with a more massive weapon, may be seen far out on the sands, stamping and then waiting. He comes up presently dragging some big congers, one quite 15lb. in weight, the reward of his patience and knowledge. Numerous sea-birds hover round, and flocks of sandpipers, turnstones and the like are busy, like their human companions, seeking materials for a meal on these seldom available hunting-grounds. It is a new and very attractive experience, well worth doing, both for interest and enjoyment, this morning between sea and land. One learns something fresh in a very pleasant and healthy way—how scollops are generally attached to a certain green weed, how small conger eels frequent the rocks and how slippery they are. In such fine air the exercise goes for nothing, and, when the tide eventually comes sweeping gently but invincibly back over the almost level channel, one is feeling fit for anything, and it is with regret that the boat is loaded with baskets and hungry humanity for the return voyage.

COLOGNAC.

THE HARVEST OF HONEY.

A GREAT many people after reading about the pleasures and profits of bee-keeping are filled with enthusiasm and immediately rush into the business, purchase perhaps a dozen hives and sufficient bees to fill them, and expect that they are going to make a small fortune, or rather that the bees are going to do this for them, while they idly look on. I have known cases like this; and about two years later these enthusiasts are firmly convinced that there is no profit in bee-keeping and give up the whole thing in disgust. Yet, if these aspirants had been content with one or two hives and thoroughly mastered the fascinating art of bee-keeping, before increasing their stock, they would, no doubt, have made a handsome profit. Not only must we understand how to manipulate the bees, but the habits and life history of the bee must be studied, and the most successful bee-keeper is the naturalist or lover of Nature, for he, or she, will, undoubtedly, take a greater interest in this busy little people than those who merely look upon them as a money-making machine. The successful bee-keeper must take a real interest in the bees and treat them as though they were his friends.

The pleasures of bee-keeping are many and the profits are good. A well-known naturalist has stated that without bees, 100,000 varieties of flowers would disappear from the face of the earth. This is a startling statement, but who will venture to contradict it! Few people realise what a vast amount of needful work the bee does in fertilising the blossoms of Nature. The nectar secreted at the base of the flower is a necessary bait for the worker bee. In trying to reach it, the bee has to push past that part of the flower containing the pollen grains; this dust adheres to the hairs on the bee's body, and when the insect settles on the next flower, particles of this dust mixes with that in its blossom, and so the flowers are fertilised. One of the most interesting examples of this is the white clover, a flower that may be found at this time of the year growing by the roadsides. Our first photograph shows the head of white clover before the bee visits it. In the second bees have been at work; in taking the honey, which is hidden at the base of each small floret, they quite unconsciously fertilise them, and when this has been accomplished the floret falls down, leaving the unfertilised florets still standing. We often find a piece of white clover which has the appearance shown in the next picture; but presently a bee passes, takes the honey, and at last the whole head is fertilised, and the

ripe seed-pods are pictured in the fourth. White clover is one of our best honey-yielding plants, and each fine morning one acre of white clover will produce 10lb. of honey, and it will go on producing this for a fortnight. This gives some idea of the vast quantity of delightful food which is being wasted during the warm days of summer. Look out on an orchard in the spring-time when the trees from above look like a sea of bloom, and try to realise that each single blossom has a drop of honey hidden in it. If the honey is not taken by the bee, it simply evaporates; but when it is carried away by the bee, more honey is secreted until the blossom fades or is sufficiently fertilised.

Let us go to the hive and watch the gathering of this great



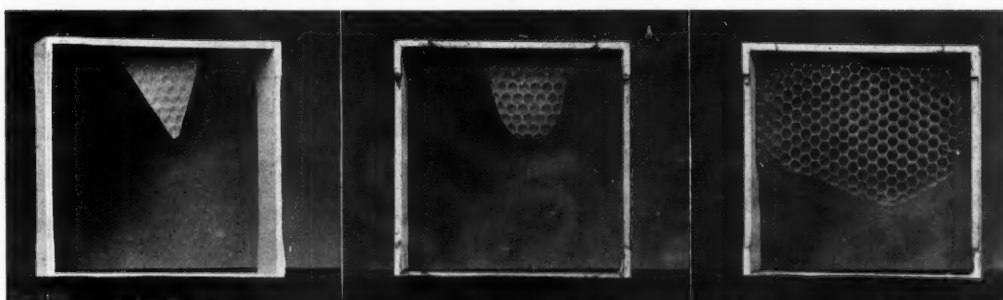
O. G. Pile.

WHITE CLOVER BEFORE AND AFTER VISITS OF BEES.

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harvest. A vast population is here, all one turmoil of hurry and bustle, thousands dashing out into the bright summer air, thousands more returning, pushing past the hive sentries in one long unending stream. If we follow this ingoing army we shall see something of how the honey is stored. For many days past the worker bees have been busy constructing cells, and every available space in the hive has been occupied by the builders of the city to construct golden vats in which to store the harvest of liquid sunshine. The bee likes to store the honey on top of the brood chamber, and the bee-keeper, knowing this, places a crate containing twenty-one little boxes, or sections as they are called. A small piece of wax is placed on the top of each as a guide or "starter" for the bees to work upon. This

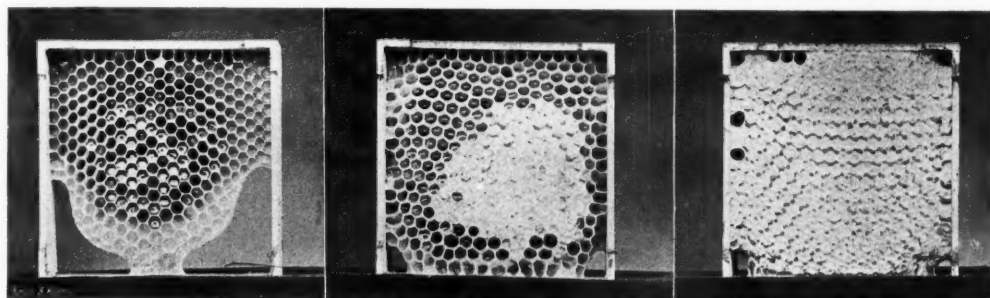
wax has the imprint of the cells stamped on it, and the worker bees soon commence to draw these cells out and add to them. When first placed in the hive the box has the appearance of my fifth illustration. As work proceeds the cells are enlarged and more wax is added. About twelve hours later the wax is increased to such an extent that the side walls are reached. The masons of the city do not rest day or night, and the result is that the cells quickly grow, and by the time they reach the base of the box honey has been stored in some of the completed cells. The whole is soon filled, and the ninth illustration shows the cells completed and some of them filled with honey and sealed



O. G. Pike.

CORRECT FORMATION OF COMB, USING "STARTER."

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O. G. Pike.

THE FINAL STAGES OF A WELL-FORMED COMB.

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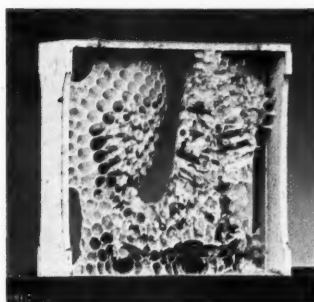
over. The tenth shows the completed section, which is a familiar sight in grocers' shops. If no starter or wax guide had been placed in the section, the bees would have constructed a rough ungainly box of honey, as in my last illustration. The reason why the bee-keeper is able to get his bees to fill these boxes with just 1lb. of honey, is because the bee will go on increasing the depth of its cell to several inches or until an obstruction is found, then, when it reaches this obstruction, it just leaves what is called a bee-space between the obstruction and the end of the cell, that is, it provides room for the bees to walk about between the sealed section and the obstruction. Therefore, by placing these sections in rows in the hive, and by having a thin metal sheet between the rows, the bees just fill the boxes and then seal the honey in.

Now let us watch the bees which are returning from the fields. They go straight to the upper part of the hive, and some will instantly give all the honey they have to the young bees which have not yet been outside the hive, and these take the honey to the cells. Others will go direct to the cells, and then, placing their head in, we see them slowly moving their long tongue round the base of the cell. As we watch we see a bright liquid slowly forming at the tip of the tongue, and when a tiny drop of honey has been deposited, this indefatigable worker turns and goes straight back to the open fields, where the flowers and the songs of countless birds, the buzz of insects' wings and the sunshine make the music of the summer day. The nectar as found in the flower is a very different thing from the honey as we know it. When taken by the bee it is sucked up with its tongue, then it undergoes a chemical change inside the bee's

body, and then it comes back through the tongue and is placed in the cells. A minute drop of formic acid from the bee's sting is sometimes added before sealing the cell over, which acts as a preservative. Honey is a wonderful gift of Nature. It stands

almost alone as a pure, natural sweet in itself. It has, also, great medicinal qualities. By the constant use of honey the entire organism is benefited in a high degree. It stimulates the appetite, aids digestion and at the same time is far better than drugs for regulating the system. Honey should not be considered simply as a luxury; it should be used in every household as a necessary article of diet. There is no danger incurred in keeping bees in gardens. They do not sting unless

molested or frightened; they do not fly about the garden and become a nuisance. No one need hesitate about keeping bees, however small the space at their disposal, while the great advantage of having a good supply of honey from your own bees will compensate for any small inconvenience which such benefactors may cause. OLIVER G. PIKE.



INCOMPLETE FORMATION WITHOUT "STARTER."

IN THE GARDEN.

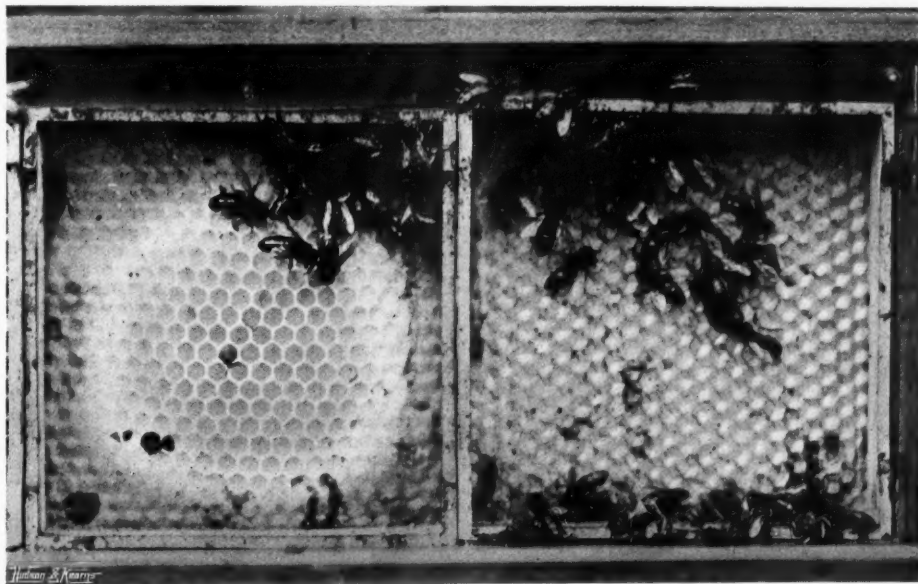
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE FLOWER BORDER.

WE have been asked for help in making the flower border bright throughout the summer. There is a wealth of colour in spring and in early summer, but during August and September blanks are numerous—the Pinks have gone, the Carnations are fading and the Starworts have not yet appeared. Looking through a Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society we came across some notes from Miss Jekyll, which we may well reproduce in part here. It is mentioned that in a well-arranged mixed border we can show the true summer flowers at their best; but it is here, more than anywhere else, that the art of

good arrangement must be put into practice. For the main spaces plants should be chosen of bold and striking beauty; but as a border of all large plants would have a kind of monotony, certain spaces—chiefly towards the front, but also running back in many parts among groups of taller things—should be planted with those of lower growth. The

CHIEF PLANTS FOR SUCH A BORDER

are Oriental Poppies, Peonies, the boldest of the Irises, Day Lilies, herbaceous Spiraeas, Enocheras, a few of the best Campanulas, Delphiniums, Lilies, three or four of the best perennial Sunflowers, the tall blue Sea-holly, Tritomas, Mulleins, Thalictrums, Dahlias, Hollyhocks and a few others. These are the plants that will form the great effects of the border. The nearest parts, and some spaces between the taller growths, should have groups of plants of lower



C. G. Pike.

BEES DRAWING OUT CELLS IN SECTIONS.

Copyright.

stature, and yet of a somewhat bold form of foliage; of these the broad-leaved Saxifrages and Funkias are among the best. Still dwarfier plants, such as Pinks and Pansies, are suitable for the extreme edge. Each kind of plant in the mixed border should stand in a bold group, and the groups, differing in size and shape according to the aspect of the plant, should follow one another in a carefully arranged sequence of colour, keeping plants of a colour together, such as Mulleins with Enotheras, and Tritoma with Oriental Poppy. In the case of the last-named it is convenient to actually intergrow the two kinds, for the foliage of the Poppy dies away early, and the blank space it would have left becomes covered by the late-growing leaves of the autumn-blooming Tritoma. Groups of red, orange and strong yellow follow well, and help each other by forming a rich colour harmony. Flowers of a strong blue colour, like Delphiniums, seem to ask for a contrast, such as that of white Lilies, or the pale yellow of Enothera lamarkiana and Verbascum phlomoides, the best of the Mulleins. In practice it is perhaps best to exclude bulbous plants from the mixed border, especially in light soils that need frequent enrichment, as the disturbing of the ground, occasioned by division of the plants and manuring, is perilous to the bulbs, the foliage of which has usually disappeared by autumn, and whose places are probably forgotten, unless marked by unsightly labels. But exception should be made in favour of the three common Lilies, the white, the orange and the tiger. Labels must be absolutely abolished in the ornamental garden.

A FEW BEAUTIFUL PLANTS.

One of the most beautiful flowers we think for the border is the Fleabane (*Erigeron superbus*). Its colour is a soft mauve, and the flowers are crowded on stems which have nothing formal about them, simply giving the impression in the existence of a mauve mist, which neither dry nor wet weather dims, until the autumn, when the whole garden is in decay. At the present time a group of this is against the white Godetia Duchess of Albany, an annual flower. Seed of this sown in March or early April will bring forth seedlings to bloom the following summer. Achillea Ptarmica The Pearl, pure white, double, summer; the double white Arabis, spring; Anchusa italica Dropmore variety, about which a note appeared recently, the bluest of blue summer flowers; the Japan Windflower (*Anemone japonica*), early autumn, pure white; *Bocconia cordata*, a tall, widely-spreading plant, with silvery leaves and creamy white flower-spikes, more for a rough corner of the

garden than a very conspicuous place; a Bellflower called *Campanula glomerata dahurica*, deep blue, long lasting and appropriate to the margin of the border, summer; the big yellow *Centaurea babylonica*, yellow, 6ft., summer; *Coreopsis grandiflora*, summer, a charming clear yellow, 3ft. or 4ft., the foliage a pea green in complete harmony with the flower colouring; Delphiniums, or perennial Larkspurs, in clear shades of blue, the most decorative of all border plants; the Sea-hollies (*Eryngium oliverianum*, among the best), 4ft., steely blue bracts and leaves, summer and autumn; *Geranium armenum*, a rich silvery blue, early summer, 2ft. to 3ft.; the well-known *Gypsophila paniculata*; *Helenium autumnale*, 4ft., yellow flowers; the Scarlet *Lychnis*, 3ft., scarlet, summer; the Bee Balm (*Monarda didyma*), growth strong, 3ft., a mass of scarlet flowers for many weeks; the annual Poppy (*Papaver umbrosum*), crimson, with dark blotch at the base of each petal; and the Foam Flower for the margin, or *Tiarella cordifolia*, as it is also called, a flower that seems as if the foam from the sea had dashed over the foliage in late spring. These are the more important plants for the mixed border, together with those named in the previous list. But gardens differ so greatly in locality and situation that general instructions are not of much use. We wish those who have unsatisfactory borders would ask for assistance, and in doing so give full details, so that as useful an answer as possible may be given.

ROSES BETTY AND DEAN HOLE.

We think the Hybrid Tea Rose Betty will be one of the Roses of the future, and has come to stay in our gardens. It is delightful in all stages, from the opening bud to the expanded flower, and there is freedom in both growth and blooming, while the petals are broad and strong; the colour gold and pure yellow, a combination rare even in the present-day Rose world, to which many additions are yearly made. Dean Hole, named after one of the greatest rosarians of modern times, is also a member of that popular and plentiful class, the Hybrid Tea. One of its chief characteristics is a perfect shape, firm broad petals, painted with soft silvery pink and faintest carmine. Not only is it one of the greatest of recent exhibition Roses, but it flowers freely in the garden, giving bountifully of the fragrant blooms of which we never tire. A summary will be made before the autumn of the new Roses. These, however, are blooming in the writer's garden, and should be made note of in case they are forgotten when sending in the orders for Roses in autumn.

A WOMAN'S REVENGE.

"EH, Signora! What can one expect at eighty-eight? One is no longer young, and this *maladetta* rheumatism cannot be kept off. Herbs are good and, if distilled after the formula that my grandmother got from her *nonna*, are very useful when taken with discretion. But all the herbs cannot cure the *disgratia* of age. In my young days people made less trouble about their maladies. A prayer to the Madonna, a candle offered at her shrine and you got better; or if she called you—*Va bene!*—you went. But now there is the doctor and the hospital, and the medicines that pierce your inmost parts, and in the end you go just the same. It is like that. No one can live beyond the appointed time, though some seem to think that by putting on colours that ill become them, and adopting manners that become them still less, they can escape the common fate and that death will forget them. Do I speak of Caterina? Signora, I would not speak against her, since God made her. Such as she is so she ever was. But yet here am I at eighty-eight, alone; and she, as old, ever down at the village with her grandchildren. Four she has as beautiful as angels; no thanks to her—she was always ill-favoured—but beautiful because of Giovanni, their grandfather, who was the handsomest man in all the country-side, and only foolish when he married Caterina. Yet, as the Signora knows, we live together, Caterina and I, and have for sixty years, and shall until we die. *Che vuole?* Money and land cannot be parted. It is as God wills."

Old Ghita sat in front of her little four-roomed cottage, with the vine leaves rustling over the door, and talked to me garrulously as the spirit moved her. Large trays of crimson tomatoes and yellow cobs of Indian corn lay drying in the sun before her, and from time to time, betwixt her rambling utterances, she would rise and turn them each in its proper order. Tall, upright and thin, her strongly-marked features recalling the mask of Dante, it seemed incredible that the years she laid claim to were really hers. All through the summer I and my family had lived in the lovely villa we had taken for the usual *villeggiatura* in the heart of the Apennines, and Ghita and Caterina had occupied the cottage behind it. Ghita was the padrona, we knew, as we had leased the villa from her, and, as she had said, Caterina lived with her. In their attitude towards us there was nothing of the prim standoffishness, the frigid, defensive manner that hedges in an English landlady. Without an effort we had treated them as friends, and cheerfully bridged over the distance that would have separated us at home. Day after day, all through that long hot summer, the sun had blazed and flamed in the brilliantly blue sky, but in our Highland retreat we had seldom found it more than pleasantly warm. The chestnut woods that clothed the hillside afforded us deep, delightful, impenetrable shade through the hottest hours, and the mountain stream rushing down from greater heights cooled the air and sang incessantly a

lullaby that made us forget the hurrying, bustling world beyond. And into this sleepy hollow, this enchanted corner of the earth, all fragrant with scent of spices unknown in our Northern lands, old Ghita fitted, an integral part, a picturesque remnant of days long since vanished into the limbo of forgotten things. Many and wonderful were the tales she could tell of the time when the little village was the country seat of the Grand Duke when he and his consort and their Court were of a mind to go a-gipsying. In those days the fifteen miles of road that separated the village from the capital of the Duchy would scarcely bear a carriage, and was rarely used by the country people except on mules and donkeys. She could tell of floods so sudden that the Court ladies were forced to sit huddled on the tops of the carriages that bore them back to civilisation, and, on occasions, so prolonged that the hungry village folk waited breathless while some of the more adventurous spirits forced a passage through the waters to bring back provisions.

On these topics Ghita was always willing to talk; but things of the moment she seldom mentioned. It was like opening some old-world record to hear her. And in that far-off past—*multi anni fa*, as my servants said—it was clear there had been trouble between Ghita and Caterina. This I saw, but of its nature I and those who surrounded me were ignorant. In appearance the two old women were widely different. Ghita, with her strong Tuscan features and the severe lines of her face, looked almost repellent. Caterina, shorter and rounder, with full cheeks and roguish eyes, secured at first sight the goodwill of all who saw her. Only the children failed to join the consensus of adult opinion, and firmly held to it that Ghita was their friend. Once or twice I had noticed strange passages between the women. On one occasion, when my two children stood near Ghita watching her nimble brown fingers prepare some fruit, Caterina came in, and, with the usual outspokenness of her class, made some jesting allusion to her childlessness. Ghita had instantly retorted: "In the house of the *padrona* inferiors, *persone di servizio*, should be silent." And Caterina accepted the rebuke without reply, though with obvious rage.

Many little incidents of this sort, each small in itself, but all showing the same trend, had filled me with desire to know what was the bond that held and yet repelled two such wholly different characters. I did not ask; but, perhaps because of the tie the children made between us, the old woman at length gave me her confidence. Maybe the day and the place moved her to speak, for it was on the Day of the Dead and in the lonely little graveyard on the hillside which held all she had loved in her vanished youth that she said:

"The Signora knows that I come of good people. My father had a *podere* and land, and all knew that I should not go to my husband without a good portion and a store of linen besides. Nor was I ill-favoured. I was tall and straight and strong. Of

all the young men in the village not one could say I had shown him favour. Why should I? I had plenty of good clothes and not too much work. Oh! Signora, it is only the Madonna who has a woman's heart, who knows the hardships of the lives of our women here. They work like the men and they bear the children too. What life is that for a young girl unless it be for the sake of the one man she cannot live without? So I hardened my heart, and to no man did I give a kiss or as much as accept a fairing from anyone. No, not even when the village was making merry at the feast of St. John. I knew too well that five or six years of married life would make me old. So, as I cared for none, I would have none of them until Giovanni Olivieri came back from Corsica.

"The Signora has doubtless heard that all our young men from this valley go to Corsica to the mines and quarries. Good wages they get there, but many never return. They get hurt and die, or they get ambitious and go still further to America, and then it is the same as if they died. We see them no more. Still, some do come back and are thankful to get home again, and among these was Giovanni. His family was one of the best in our *paese*. His father was a hard-working man and knew how to save. Year by year he put a little by until he bought the villa in which the Signora lives. It was a good investment, for every year we let it to the *forestieri*, who pay us well. When Giovanni first came home I met him at the church. *Ma! Com'era bello!* The Signora has seen his grandson who keeps the café in the village. He resembles Giovanni as the cold sun of winter does the sun of summer. When I set eyes on him it seems to me as if one of the old gods had come back to earth again. I have seen their pictures in the galleries the one year I stayed at Firenze. The Signora will have noticed that many of us in this *paese* have hair that somewhat resembles the *capelli d'oro* of the little Signorina, only more red and strong. It comes down to us, they say, from the men of old, who came from the North and conquered the country as far as Rome, and even drove away the Holy Father. It was so long ago. *Chi sa?* When I met Giovanni's eyes that morning, I swore that unless he put his hand in mine to take me for his wife I would live and die a maid. There was no hindrance. My family was honourable and not too poor, and soon Giovanni said he loved me and asked me of my father, and so it came about that we were *fidanzate*. Oh! but we were most happy. On St. John's *festa* we went to the fair together and saw the sights, and all the village knew that after the *Capo d'anno* I should go to his home. It is the custom with us for the son to take his wife to his father's house, and pleased was I to go, though I knew Giovanni's father, Paolo, to be a stern man, with little pity for those who were not as strong as himself. But even he was pleased to give us his blessing, and we only waited for the new year to wed, as was just to my father, for I had ever been a great help to him, and there is much work to be done in our mountain country during the autumn with the vintage and the Indian corn and the chestnut gathering. Signora, from our childhood Caterina and I had always been friends. She and I were different, and I liked to have her near me as one does a little dog or kitten. She was merry and saucy. She laughed at my dislike for men, and used to say that if she had as good a portion as mine she would not have waited so long to wed. I was then twenty-five, and Rina, as I called her then, was two years younger. In our country, Signora, it is not considered fitting for a young girl to go about alone with a man, not even her betrothed; and so it happened that Caterina was often with Giovanni and me. She would sit with us in the spring evenings on the bridge, and watch the fireflies on the water; and on Ascension Day, when we rose with the dawn to hunt for the little *grilli* which were to bring us luck for the year, she came with us. Someone had to be with us, and even when I noticed that Rina and Giovanni talked and laughed a great deal together, I did not suspect. Why should I? We were betrothed, Giovanni and I, and Caterina was my friend.

"The rest of that part I need not tell. One day Caterina came to me and told me that Giovanni must marry her—that he had been faithless to me. I struck her on the mouth, and bade her go and hide her shame in the river, though it was too clean for such as she. For a moment she hung her head; then she laughed in my face and left me. I went to my lover. What passed between us I can never tell. To no one on earth have I spoken of it; but on that summer day my youth fell from me, and I became, at heart at least, as old as I am to-day. Presently Caterina joined us; but now she did not laugh. She wept with loud weeping and many tears, until I almost thought that laugh of hers when we had been alone had come from my mouth and not from hers. Her father, she said, had gone to Giovanni's father to ask what restitution his son would make. What could he do but that which killed my life? At my bidding Giovanni told his father of his sin, and Paolo, whose good name was dear to him, as it is to many of our Tuscan peasants, went to Caterina's father and said that, though his son had forfeited his blessing, the shame of injuring a woman should never be laid at his door. So they were married quietly. The Signora understands. It was not fitting that there should be rejoicings. As for me, I

went away with an English lady to Firenze, and that year, for the first time, I was not with my own people to keep the Feste of the Natale and the *Capo d'anno*.

"In the summer I returned. My father was old and wanted me. There was work to be done, and the poor are put on earth to do it. It was then I heard that Caterina's baby had been born; but I heard naught else about her and Giovanni, as I went not to the village, nor did I gossip with my neighbours. Caterina I never saw until, one day when I was stooping over my work in the fields, I heard someone call me, and looked up. There stood Caterina with the *bambino* in her arms. She held up the child for me to look at, and asked me to come to see her in her home. Giovanni, she said, had now forgotten me, and, if I were willing, we could be friends as we had been before he came home from Corsica. I asked her if she were happy. She laughed, as was ever her way, and answered: '*Perche non?* I have good food and clothes, and not too much work. What can a woman want more?'

"'Some women want love,' I said. 'Dost thou love Giovanni?'

"Again she laughed. '*Sciocca*,' she sneered; 'did'st not see from the beginning that I meant to have Giovanni? Did'st think it was for love of thee or to listen to thy soft talk that I sat by the river night after night? Thou lookedst at the fireflies, I at Giovanni's eyes.'

"'And he,' I cried; 'at whose eyes looked he?'

"'At mine, of course, since I looked at his. It is a rare man would do otherwise. But now thou art welcome to him; it was more his goods I wanted than the man himself,' she answered, shrugging her shoulders.

"'Be silent!' I cried; for I felt the passion rising within my breast, and I feared that I might hurt her. 'I loved Giovanni, and I trusted thee and thou did'st betray me. Art not ashamed to publish thus thy ill-doing?'

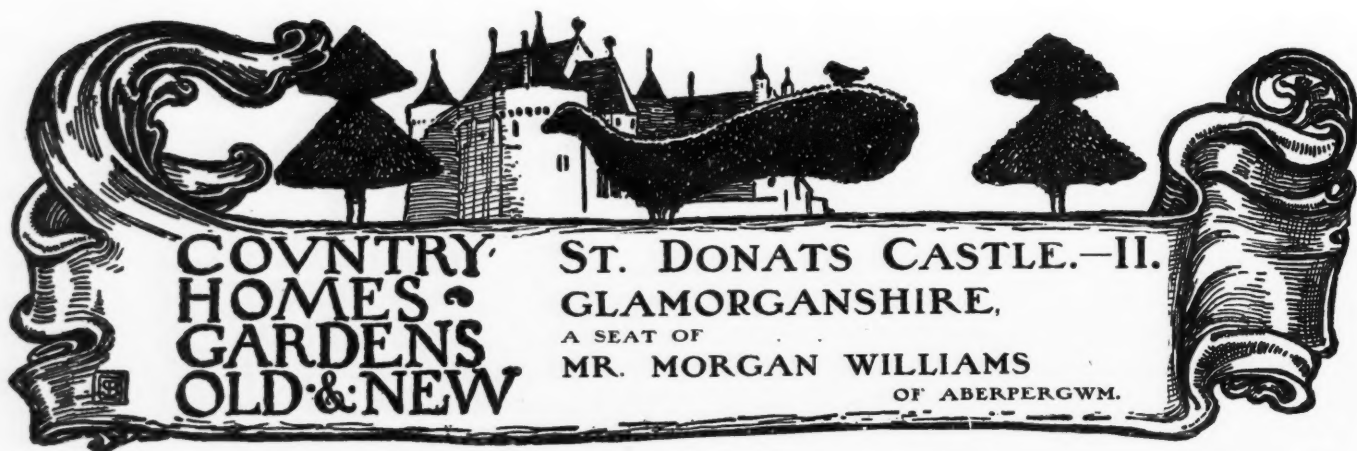
"'No more than thou to proclaim thy blindness. What have I done to be ashamed of? I had no portion; thou had'st plenty. I wanted comfort and ease; thou had'st both. I had as good a right as thou to try for Giovanni, and if I used thy friendship and my own good name as a trap to catch him with, where the fault? I could not have caught him without. With thy wealth thou canst easily buy another lover. *Martello d'oro rompe le porte di ferro*. For me, I work no more for others; others work for me.'

"Had I killed her as she stood there, Signora, I am sure the Madonna would have pardoned me. For a moment I was very near it. Then I laughed, for I thought of a plan that would hurt her more. '*Ai ragione*,' I said, 'thou hast acted according to thy heart: thou hast stolen my love from me and laid this shame on me. It is enough; more than this thou shalt not do. We will divide the affair. Thou hast the man; I will take the goods. *Così saremo eguali*. *Ma bado bene!* For all thy arts, I shall be thy superior, mistress of the house and goods to get which you lied and robbed me.'

"That very night, Signora, I sent to Paolo and told him I could not bear the shame his son had laid on me, and that I looked to him to make it good to me. This he did by marrying me, so that I became mistress of the Casa Olivieri, and all that he had of money and of goods became mine. It was as I had said. Caterina had the son, but I, as the father's wife, was the *padrona* and her mistress. Mine has not been a happy life, Signora. My husband was stern and hard and Caterina tried to make mischief between us. But I did my duty to my husband, and he said so when he lay dying. And Giovanni lived until five years ago; always in my house, always my *buon amico*, for I understood and I had forgiven. It was Caterina that was absent gossiping in the village when he had the stroke that killed him, and he died in my old arms that could scarcely hold him. And Caterina still lives with me. Part of this house is hers, but I am the real *padrona*. I would not change lots with her if I could. There is only one thing I envy her. It is her children. Four she has as beautiful as the angels that hold up the lights on the altar. Caterina says I have no part in them, that they are all hers. But, Signora, in this matter as in many others I do not think with her. It is true I am old, and the things of the present are not always clear to me; but it seems to me these children belong to the past as well as to the present, and if Giovanni's father was my husband they must in part be mine. They call me *Nonna* as well as Caterina. The Signora has a kind heart, she will understand, and the Good God and the Madonna will make it clear in their own good time. One thing I know, and that I will cling to as long as I have breath, and that is that I am the *padrona* of Casa Olivieri, and that as long as I live Caterina shall never have the things for which she broke my heart. Do I grieve? Signora, it is well to be easy when one is old. As Caterina said, '*Martello d'oro rompe le porte di ferro*.' It is all as God wills. *Ma sono padrona io*.

"Grazie, Signora, for listening to an old woman's tale. She will remember not to mention it to Caterina what I told her about the children. *La saluto, Signora, a riverderla.*"

M. A. RUTHERFURD.



LAST week we lingered amid the courts and gardens of St. Donats, and glanced at the history of the early Stradlings who had created them. To-day we will enter the porch—looking up as we do so at the fascinating little oriel above us—and cross the threshold. We find ourselves behind the hall screen and below the gallery; but the old ones, unfortunately, were at some period destroyed, and their replacement, from designs by the late Mr. Garner, was part of the immense work of renovation carried on for some years by Mr. Morgan Williams of Aberpergwm, when he acquired the property at the close of the last century. To the left of the screen are two arched doorways; through the first we may ascend to the gallery and to the porch chamber with its typical arched doorway and its oriel, almost more charming within than without, set with stone seats and groined vaulting centring in a flat lion mask—a device found also in other parts of the castle. If, instead of going up to the gallery, we pursue our way on the level, we enter the picturesque apartment with many arched recesses and outlets now called the old hall, but whose original purpose is obscure. Here we begin to realise the wealth of fine genuine sixteenth century furniture—Gothic at its opening and Renascent at its close—with which Mr. Morgan Williams has so amply and appropriately fitted the castle. Some of it had always been in the old family seat of Aberpergwm in the northern part of Glamorganshire; but much he has himself during a long course of years carefully selected. Such a piece is the Gothic cupboard which faces us in the old hall. It came, some thirty years ago, from that famous old Leicestershire house, Quenby Hall, which has just recently been

purchased by Mr. Morgan Williams's sister, Mrs. Edward Greaves. Passing up the stairway to the right of this piece we find ourselves in the new armoury. Now that the Wallace Collection belongs to the nation, Mr. Williams has, perhaps, the finest lot of armour of any Englishman, and to house it adequately Mr. Garner contrived the vast room we depict in a hidden space between the curtain wall and the great hall, so that scarce any new work appears on the outside.

Returning to the screen, the second doorway leads to the old buttery, still retaining its hatch, and thence we enter the old kitchen with its fire arch 16ft. across, fully capable of roasting whole such "bucks" or "peesces of fleashe" as Sir Edward's many applicants permitted him to retain for "making merie" at home. The offices are now conveniently situate for the service of the dining-room on the opposite side of the courtyard; but though put to different use, these ancient features of the domestic arrangements of our ancestors are carefully retained.

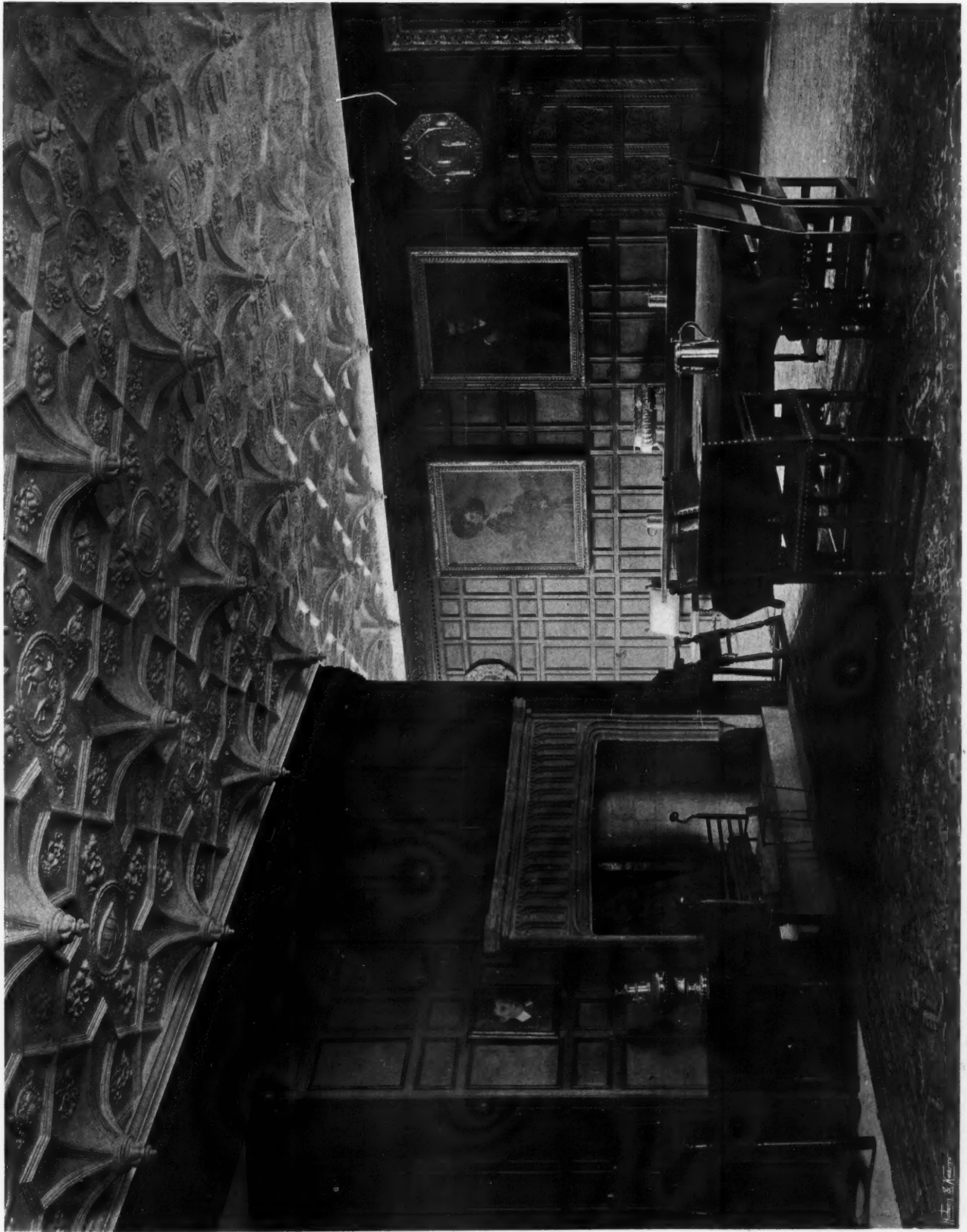
Passing through the screen, we enter the great hall, which has remained practically unaltered since the third Sir Edward built it in the early half of the fifteenth century. Windows, arches, roof and chimney are all original and intact. Our illustrations show how right, in excellence of quality and restraint of quantity, is its furnishing, of which the chairs of early turned work form part. This form is supposed to have come from Byzantium to Scandinavia, and from Scandinavia to England at an early date, and continued to Henry VIII's time. The finest surviving example is probably that from Glastonbury, now in the palace at Wells. Those at St. Donats are reputed to have been abbots' chairs from Neath Abbey, whence they



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ENTRANCE PORCH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



COUNTRY LIFE.

DINING-ROOM

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were transported to Aberpergwm at the Dissolution. In the hall, too, stands an interesting credence, which we figure separately, and which is one of the few sixteenth century pieces which Mr. Williams inherited. On it stands one of the great silver-mounted black jacks made in 1653 for Lord Protector Cromwell, who was a relation of the Aberpergwm family, though they were not of his politics. It came from the Tower of London, after the fire there, and its fellow is at Powerscourt, in County Wicklow. The other roundel of the Hampton Court series appears below an opening into what is a long gallery, but may originally have been but a small solar.

The normal fifteenth century arrangement, however, was here somewhat interfered with by pre-existing buildings. In any case, the gallery is not the definite creation of a particular moment, but an adaptation and extension of what was there earlier. It includes in its pleasantly irregular outer wall a round tower, and stretches on to the point in the southern curtain-wall where was situate a postern with an overhanging machicolated bastion over it arranged to drop things on any who attacked. Over this now stands the gallery bay, certainly not later than Elizabeth's reign, so that the fifth Sir Edward may have contrived the gallery—almost a necessary adjunct to a house of any pretension in his day—and given it this splendid southern outlook over the



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hanging gardens, the glen, the Severn Sea and the Devonshire coast beyond. The gallery is now full of old furniture, whereof the Gothic predominates, among which is a credence, seen on the right of our picture, and noticeable as being of deal. This clearly marks its foreign nationality amid many native pieces. Mediæval folk were in the habit of using the material at hand—the English their oak, the Swiss their pine, and it is from the latter country that this piece emanated.

The gallery is reached from a lobby and wide stone stairway opening out of the hall recess; this is likewise the way to what were, no doubt, built as the State chambers, now the dining and drawing rooms. Their Gothic chimney-pieces show them to be coeval with the hall—indeed, the hall and drawing-room chimney-pieces are almost a pair—but their size and breadth made it easy to give them the proportions and fittings fashionable under Elizabeth. Upon them, therefore, the fifth Sir Edward largely concentrated his attention. He threw out so wide and deep a two-storeyed bay that both rooms acquired the then favourite L shape. He added panelling and plasterwork; in the case of the upper room removing the earlier attic and making a barrel ceiling. Much of this work was decayed or destroyed when Mr. Morgan Williams commenced operations. The dining-room panelling is original, with carved frieze, arched and pilastered overmantel



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Oriel of Porch.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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THE OLD HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



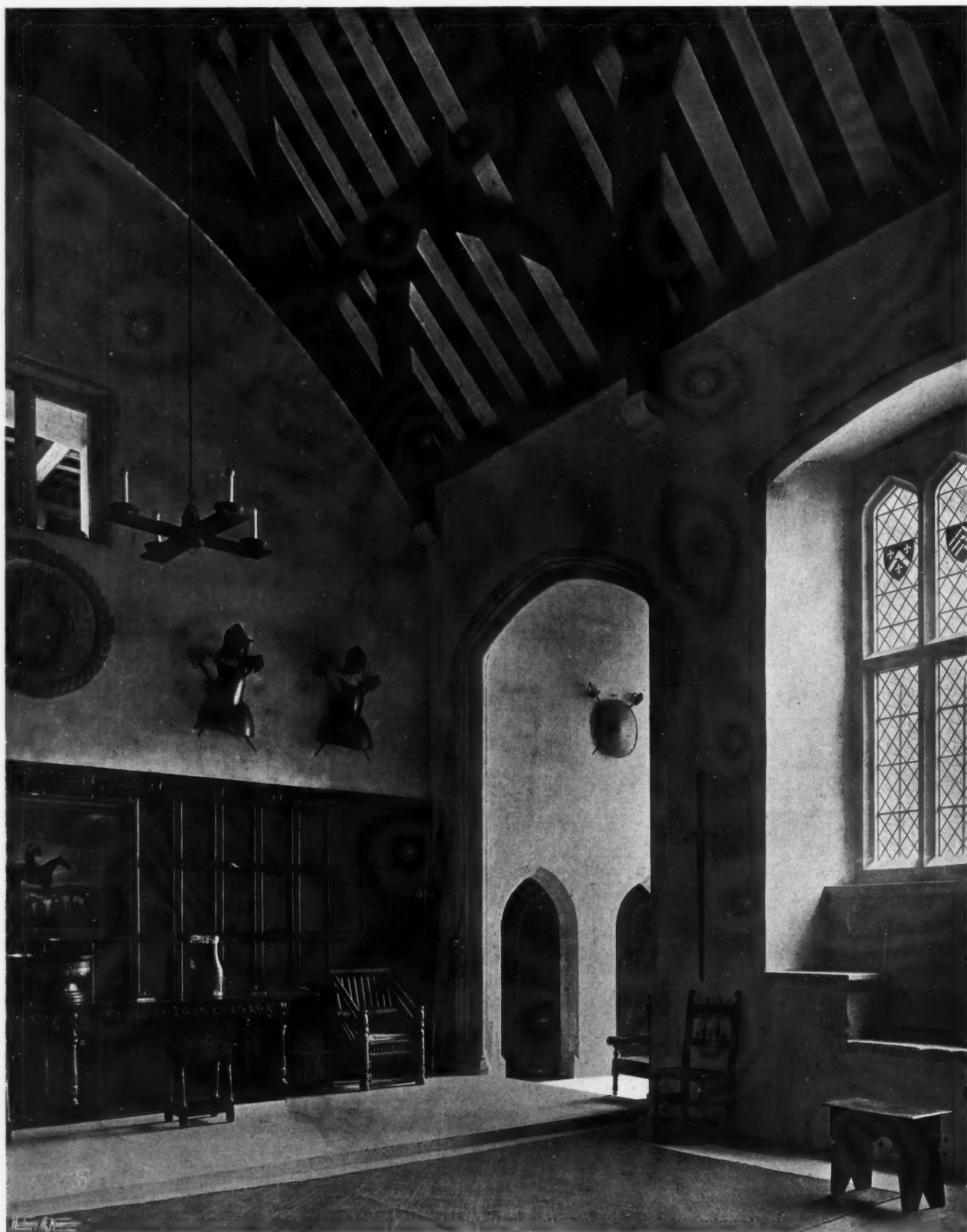
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THE ARMOURY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and elaborate doorway. The panels, too, are interesting, being an early example of bolection mouldings, which were then not applied but worked in the solid. The ceiling is new, an excellent adaptation of one still extant at Sizergh Castle, a copy of which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum. For the drawing-room, whose walls were bare, panelling from three old rooms in Hertfordshire has been used, and forms an adequate setting for several fine pictures selected from the large number, family pictures for the most part, still at Aberpergwm. Facing us is Isaac Olivier's excellent equestrian portrait of Prince Henry, James I.'s eldest son. The portraits of Richard and Henry Cromwell by Walker, the Parliamentary painter, are on the side wall and do not appear in our illustration; nor does a little panel picture of Philip II. of Spain, found, a good many years ago, thrown behind the panelling of one of the St. Donats rooms. Was a likeness of Queen Mary's husband a dangerous possession at the time that Sir Thomas Stradling lay in the Tower,

and the incident of the cross-bearing ash tree had thrown suspicion upon the whole of the St. Donats household? His son Edward had no desire to be implicated, and may well have thus disposed of it. Much fine stuff is in the drawing-room, such as the set of high-backed Charles II. chairs, with tapestry seats representing "Æsop's Fables." Here also stands the Grinling Gibbons console, which we illustrate separately. This great master was, as we know, addicted to fitments rather than furniture. But the finished design and perfect craftsmanship of this piece makes one feel confident that it was produced, if not by his hand, at least under his eye. A fellow-console is in the possession of Mr. Seymour Lucas. There was a late flat ceiling in the drawing-room, but a drawing of about 1820 still showed Sir Edward's of barrel shape, and ample evidence of the latter's character was revealed when the more modern one was removed, though not enough of it to give an idea of its patterning, and the present one is founded on that



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THE GREAT HALL AND ITS ORIEL RECESS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



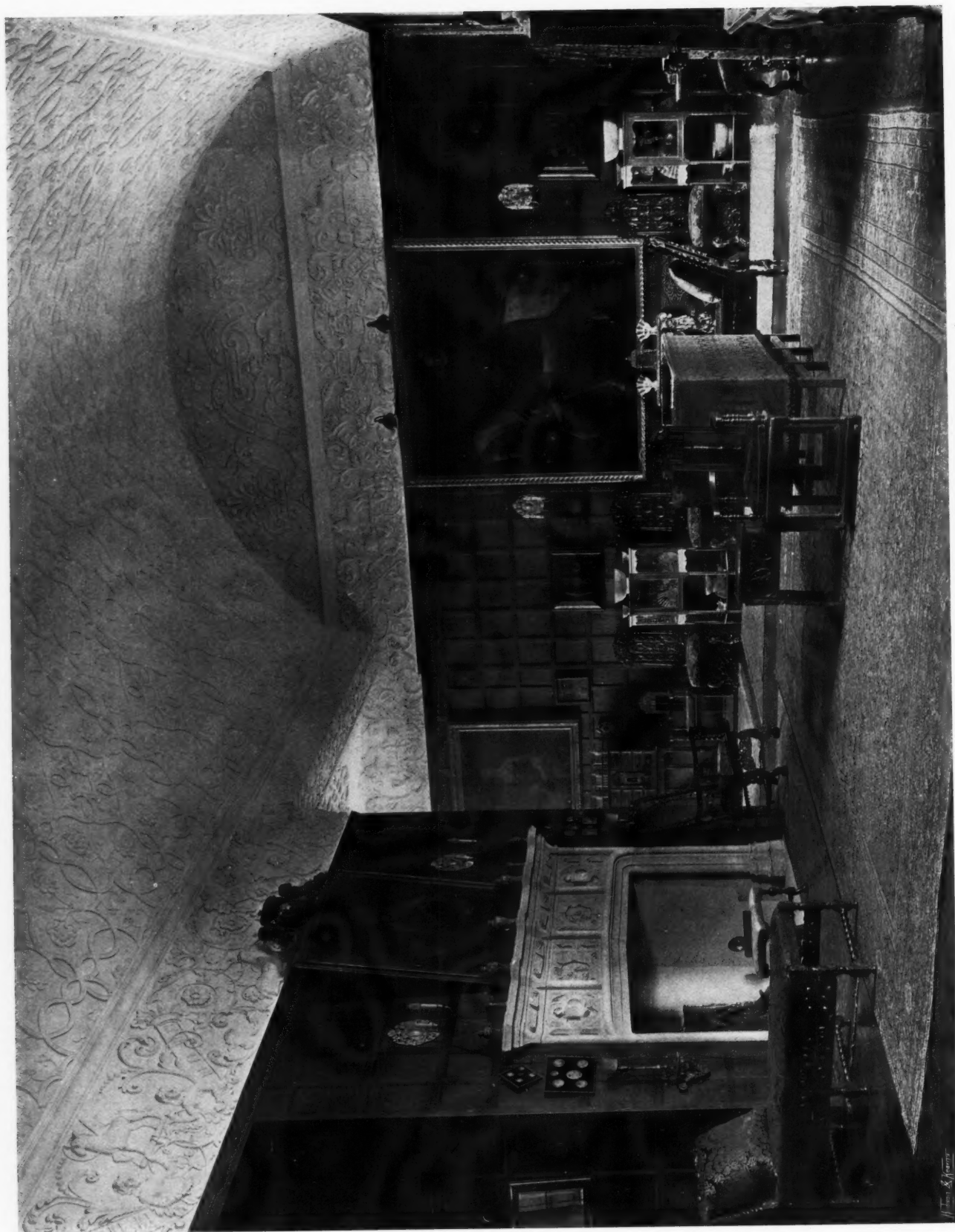
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CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE GREAT HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

in the gallery at Chasleton in Oxfordshire. The deep, bold frieze, embodying the Stradling stag and the Williams lamb amid its arabesques, was designed by Mr. Bodley, who succeeded his late partner, Mr. Garner, as Mr. Williams's architectural adviser. It has consinship with those at Sizergh and Chasleton, but is more especially suggested by that in the painted chamber. Here the fifth Sir Edward gave play to his genealogical leanings, and amid the mermaids, the scrolls and the birds are set the coats of the chief families allied with the Stradlings. As the achievement over the chimney-piece (which is Gothic, showing that Sir Edward did not build, but merely decorated the room) consists of the Royal arms and Tudor supporters on a field of pomegranates, the inference is that this work dates from Queen Mary's time, when Sir Thomas was alive and his son Edward, recently returned from Rome, was beginning to make his taste and activities felt. Of the same date is the extraordinarily massive and elaborate bed which came out of the old castle of the Caradoc family in

Gower. Late Georgian panelling had been put into this room, but, on its removal, the old painting was everywhere visible, and was faithfully redone by Mr. Morgan Williams himself. It was not only in this chamber that Sir Edward indulged in heraldic decorations. No doubt the many stone roundels already alluded to were set by him in various parts of the walls of the castle, but the hall suggested itself to him as a meet place to exhibit pictorially his new-formed views of the antiquity of his family. Although all this has now disappeared, together with the legend on which it rested, it was there when St. Donats was visited in 1756 by Bishop Pococke, who tells us: "Just on the sea is St. Donat's Castle, the seat of the Easterlings or Stradlings, one of the twelve Normans; it is a very noble pile of old building round a court, and kept in fine order. There is a grand old hall, with the arms of the twelve Normans, and an account of the estates which fell to the share of each of them." The bishop, however, found no Stradling to receive him, for the race of this "one of the twelve Normans" was extinct. Full of years and



"COUNTRY LIFE."

DRAWING-ROOM.

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"COUNTRY LIFE."

THE PAINTED CHAMBER.

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honour, the fifth Sir Edward had passed away in 1609. With him the highest point in the fortunes of the family and of the castle had been reached. Yet his cousin and adopted son, Sir John, poet and scholar, "a miracle for his forwardness in learning and pregnancy of parts," carried on the family traditions and was fifth of James's first batch of baronets in May, 1611. Dying in 1637, he left behind him a loyal and stalwart batch of sons and grandsons to fight and die for their King when the Great Rebellion broke out. Once again were "the barracks" occupied, the lower storey being pierced by the wide arched apertures to make them available for the horses of the sixth Sir Edward's regiment which he led at Edge Hill. Taken prisoner on that field, he was freed by exchange, only to die at Oxford, leaving a son to continue the fight, and a widow who, at out-of-the-way St. Donats, was able to shelter the scholarly Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh, who found congenial occupation in the well-stocked shelves of the library.

The Restoration found the Stradlings somewhat exhausted both in stamina and fortune. Before the rebellion had broken out the sixth Sir Edward posed as a business man—a shareholder

Walpole earned the reputation of being the first to use this recently-introduced wood in a lavish manner. By the time Houghton was complete the Stradlings were no longer improving St. Donats, for their long line of direct male descent was drawing to a close. Sir Thomas, the last of them, died under somewhat suspicious circumstances at Montpellier in 1738 at the age of twenty-eight. A great table tomb to him and his elder brother, who had predeceased him, occupies a large part of the little chantry which the fifth Sir Edward converted into a family mausoleum. It is attached to the church of St. Donats, which rises on a solitary tree-girt stretch of sward at the bottom of the glen. Surely to Sir Edward its chief interest must have lain in its narrow chancel arch of undoubted Norman date—concrete evidence of the existence of FitzHamon's knight! The rest of the edifice is clearly the work of the historic and not of the apocryphal Stradlings, and is of the same date as the main portions of the castle which we have attributed to the third Sir Edward, who died in 1453. None of the family, however, is known to have been buried there before the fourth Sir Edward, who was laid in the chancel in 1535. Later on his father's body



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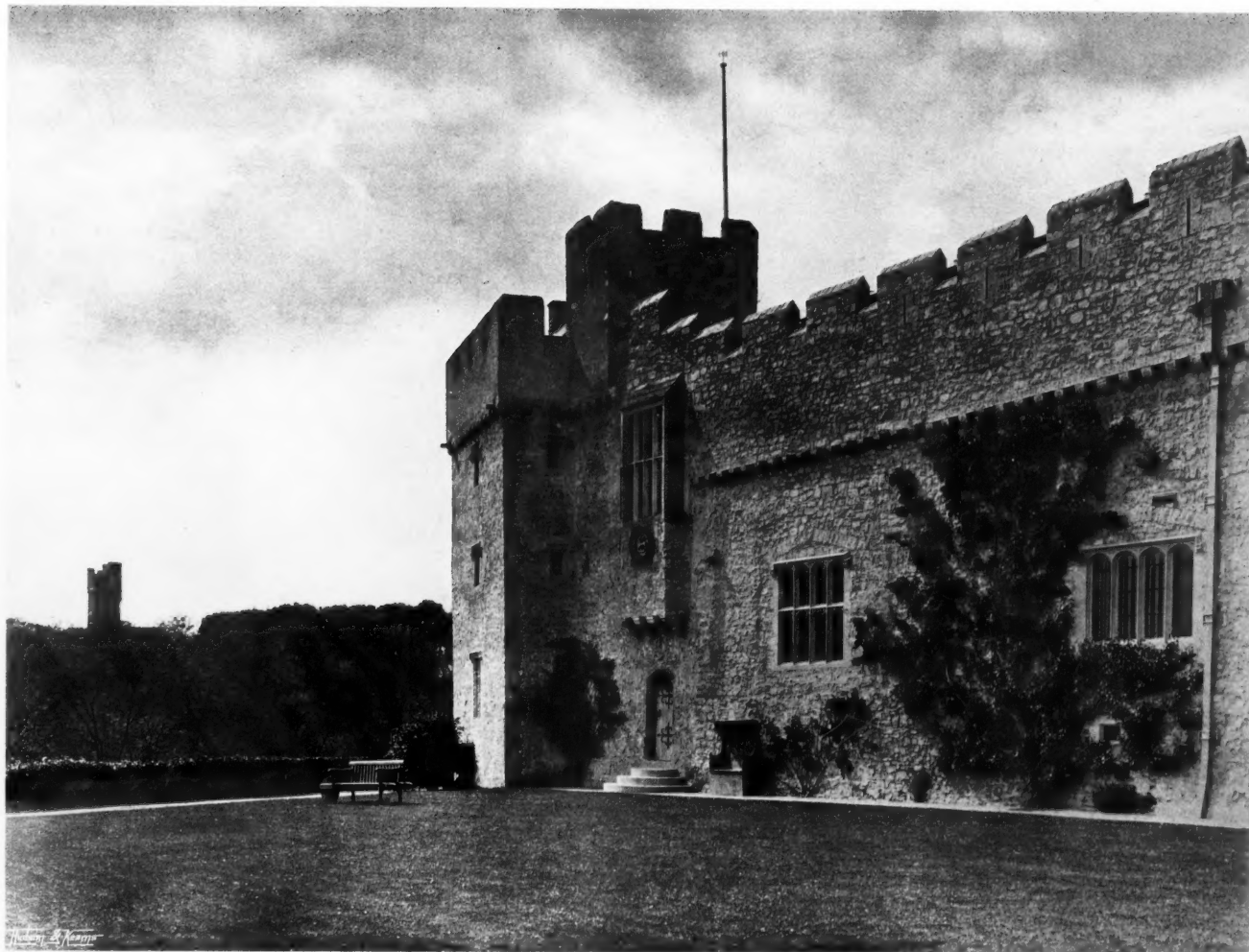
THE GALLERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

in the soap monopoly, a promoter of the scheme for supplying London with water from Hoddesdon, an agent for the collecting of some of Charles's doubtful taxes. If not the former, at least the latter operation proved financially disastrous, both to Sir Edward and to some of his neighbours. As fighters on the losing side he and his son suffered in their purse, and the earlier method of profitable marriages did not occur to their successors. Moreover, none of the last four baronets of the line was a distinguished man impressing himself on his country's annals. This decline from the past had, from our point of view, this advantage, that money and energy were lacking to remodel St. Donats in the classic style. It remained cared for but untouched, except that a few of the lesser rooms were relined in the taste of the day. The red parlour, with its ceiling of wreathed fruit and flowers and its well-designed panelling and mantel-piece, is a finished, if simple, example of Wren's day. No later in style, though surely somewhat later in date, is the Mahogany Chamber, whose rich dark panels are a good background for the stately crimson brocade bed. This room undoubtedly is a very early example of the employment of mahogany as a room lining—earlier than Houghton, where Sir Robert

was brought from Cardiff and placed beside him. This, however, did not suit the fifth Sir Edward, who dug them up and transferred them to the chantry, and hung there a set of painted panel pictures which yet remain. They represent these two ancestors, whose bodies he translated, and their wives kneeling. Behind them, in the same attitude, are their children, above them their shields of many quarterings, and below an inscription. A third picture is of Sir Edward himself and his wife, similarly depicted, except that in this case there were no children to set behind them. The inscription, giving the date of 1590 for this latest of the paintings, declares their joint wish and expectation of being buried here. This desire was duly carried out, their adopted son, Sir John, setting up a great pilastered and arcaded wall monument of alabaster to their memory with the motto, "Virtues hole praise consisteth in doing."

With the end of the Stradling line came St. Donats' less prosperous days. At first it was cared for, as Bishop Pocock, found, for it was held by the Mansell cousin from Margam near by. At his death the whole Stradling inheritance was in dispute among collaterals, and at the ultimate division one of the best estates was sold to pay lawyers' fees. St. Donats fell to the share of



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GALLERY BAY IN THE SOUTHERN CURTAIN WALL

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the Tyrrwhits, and for a century "had no history," though this period can hardly be described as a happy time for it. Then, in a state of considerable decay, it was bought by Dr. Carne, who claimed kinship to the Stradlings. We have alluded to some of his alterations and repairs, and will mention them no further. Later on the place attracted the attention of Mr. Morgan Williams. Aberpergwm, though endeared by long associations, had its drawbacks, for the development of the South Wales coalfields, if it added to its value as an estate, detracted from its amenity as a residence. St. Donats, in the same county, had its interest as a mediæval relic heightened by its beautiful position and environment. It

formed—or could be restored to form—an admirable setting to the ancient armour and early furniture which Mr. Williams began, early in life, to collect. "All comes to him who knows how to wait," and some time after Dr. Carne's death Mr. Williams was able to purchase the estate. It is a striking example of the happy conjunction of a man and place entirely suited to each other—needing each other for the full realisation of the ideas of the one and the possibilities of the other. Most fortunate is the result to those lovers of old-world fabrics and old-world ways who are able to feel themselves almost transported back to mediæval times when they are admitted through the ancient gate-house and restored curtain walls of the Stradling fortress by the kind permission of the courteous owner.

H. AVRAY TIPPING.



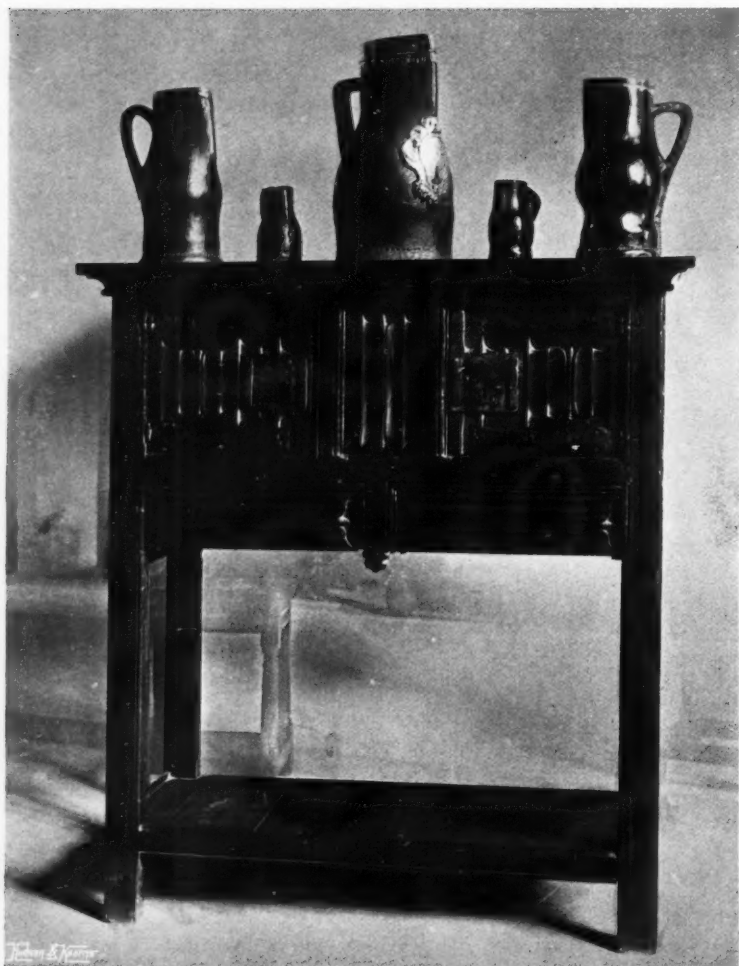
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THE EARLY ENGLISH GATEHOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

FERN-HUNTING.

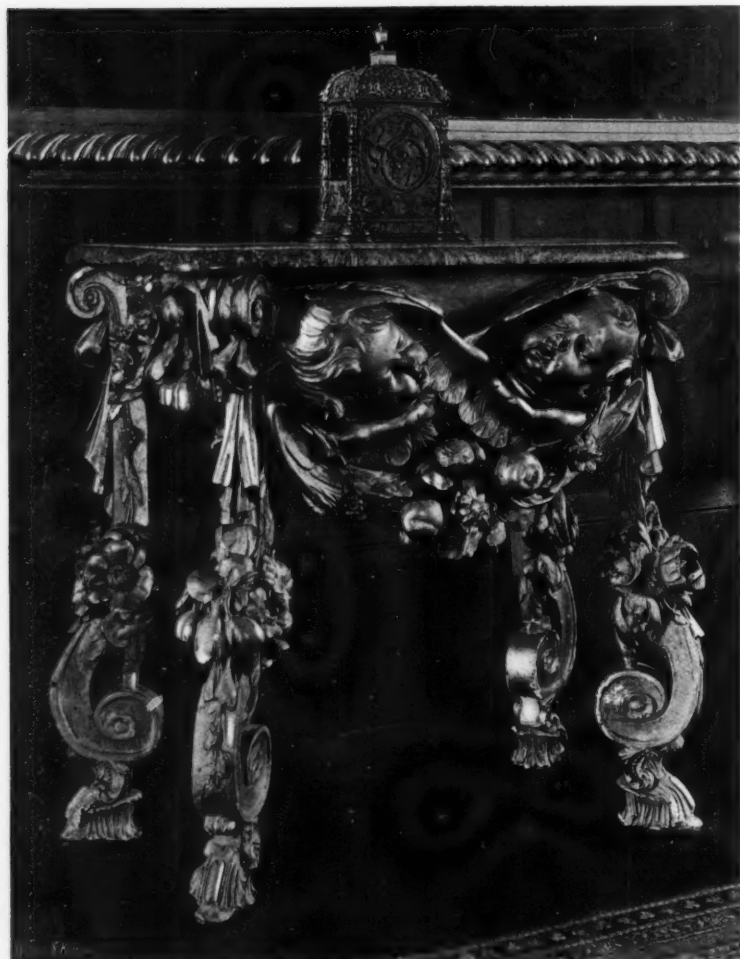
DURING the holiday season a great number of visitors to the country amuse themselves by collecting ferns, and on their return to town we may see at the railway termini the primary results of their quest in the shape of baskets, hampers and bundles of ferns mingled with their luggage, indicating a taste for the natural beauty and grace of these pretty plants. Looking, however, backwards and forwards from this particular point of view, we shall become aware of two very serious drawbacks to the true fern-lovers' appreciation of such



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CREDENCE AND BLACK JACKS.

"C.L."



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A GRINLING GIBBONS CONSOLE.

"C.L."

popular fern-hunting. In the first place, if we examine the sources whence these plants have been derived, we shall frequently find districts ravaged and despoiled, and it may be even entirely denuded by remorseless and repeated raids. Too often we may find abundant evidence that the plants have been rooted up at one place only to be thrown away at another, when, through utter lack of care, they have become wilted and unsightly, while, invariably, at places of popular resort, even in the counties the ferns love best, we must travel far afield to find the ferns in anything like their natural robustness and beauty. So much for the backward aspect of these fern-hunting expeditions, which embraces, as we see, a very large admixture of that Vandalism which is gradually denuding the country of many of its rarest and most precious native plants. As regards the forward view, *i.e.*, the fate of such acquisitions, were it the case that the ferns thus removed were carefully and appreciatively tended when they reach their destinations in town gardens, so that eventually they displayed their beauties there to the best effect the environment permitted, we would say nothing against their collection; but it is safe to assert that not one in 1,000 has such an opportunity, and that the vast majority perish entirely for lack of attention or care in planting. The "tripper" fern-hunter, unfortunately, is not the only sinner; there is the resident village collector, who advertises in the *Exchange* and uproots the seedlings for a mile or so around to supply the demand induced by cheapness and the beauty of the plants, and there is the wholesale Vandal, who raids the district with a horse and cart and sacks galore and supplies the market dealers by the thousand, leaving desolation in his track. Happily, of late years the law has stepped in to emphasise the property rights in these plants, and to punish those who steal them in the several ways indicated, a measure which has had marked results in many localities prolific in ferns.

The curious fact, however, in this connection is that, from the true fern connoisseur's point of view, the great bulk of this so-called fern-hunting is energy entirely misplaced. Not one in 10,000 of the so-called fern-hunters knows what he or she should really look for or is aware that here and there, where ferns grow freely, there are scattered among the common or weed forms others which are quite distinct and very much more beautiful or curious. These are of the same species as their fellows, but Nature, in some occult way, has not only shaped them differently, both generally and in detail, but in most cases has stamped this difference so deeply in their constitutions that they reproduce themselves truly from their spores, or if they vary, do so in such a way that much-improved forms can be obtained by selection. The result of this capacity to sport is marvellous. A complete collection of varieties of our forty odd species of British ferns would consist of at least 2,000 distinct ones, of which the majority have been found wild in our hedge banks, glens and ferny woods, or in our wild moorlands and hillsides from Land's End to John o' Groats and in the sister and Channel Islands. Naturally, these wild sports are not so common that a merely superficial search will mean a good "bag"; it is, on the contrary, a case of one in many thousands, so that the connoisseur fern-hunter is glad if a day's or even a week's hunt results in a single really good thing, although as a matter of fact the writer has rarely devoted a day to careful hunting without finding something distinct and worth taking home. Naturally, such "finds" present themselves in different guises, they may be mere seedlings in which it is only the experienced eye which can detect any promise, or they may be old-established plants. Two of the writer's best finds, for instance, consisted of a tiny plant an inch or two high and a huge clump of thirty-three crowns, which required the assistance of two men to lift and a horse and cart to transport. As a general rule these "sports" are solitary, or if there be more than one, the others are obviously offspring either by offset or spore of a common progenitor. They may betray their presence boldly or by the mere projection of part of a frond from a mass of common ones, or they may be entirely hidden and only discoverable by pushing asunder the foliage of their companions. In any case, he who aspires to be a fern-hunter of this class must be prepared to be patient and persistent and be also thoroughly well acquainted with the common ferns of the species, so that any difference may be noted. As a rule, the successful fern-hunter commences by a more or less chance find, which appears to be essential to infuse the necessary faith in the existence and discoverability of such sports into the beginner; but once this has happened, the fern "fever" is caught and the student speedily becomes the enthusiast. The main point to bear in mind is that

wherever ferns are growing there is a chance of a find, and some of our own finds have turned up where plants were few and far between.

So much for the hunting, and now for a word or two on the quarry. It will be asked, How do these "sports" differ from the common ones? This could only be answered clearly pictorially, for they differ in many ways. The most general form—i.e., the one into which most species have sported—is that of the tasselled or crested section. Normally fern fronds and their side divisions terminate in points, blunt or acute as the case may be; but in a very large number of species "sports" have occurred in which these points are multiplied so as to form tassels, and as this capacity is usually inherited and often varies in extent in the offspring,

than absurd to fill rockeries with some three or four species, all normal and all alike, and dignify them with the name of ferneries, as is so often done. It may be repeated that wherever ferns grow wild it is well worth while to carefully examine them individually as far as possible, on the chance of coming across one of these sports. They are by no means so rare as to render the search all but hopeless, and when found, even if they only be curious, instead of high-class thorough-breeds, they form souvenirs, while if they be new the gratification is, of course, infinitely greater. In any case, one thing is certain, and that is that, once a decent find has been secured, the finder will never dream thereafter of carrying home a bundle of common ferns indiscriminately collected, but will leave these religiously alone as Nature's raw material for the prizes he has now learnt to look for, and consequently there is one Vandal the less.

CHAS. T. DRURY.

IRISH SOIL INOCULATION.

IN the Summer Number of COUNTRY LIFE a very interesting article on this subject by Professor Finlayson was given, reporting progress of experiments. So much interest is being evinced in bacteria for leguminous plants, that it has occurred to me that readers would like to hear the results of some experiments made in Ireland during the past two seasons with cultures supplied from America. The first experiments were tried in pots with red clover. An equal number of seeds out of the same lot were sown in each pot at the same time, and they got equal treatment all through, the only difference being that the seeds in one were inoculated with nitro-culture and the seeds in the other not. In the course of a few weeks it was easy to see that there was a great difference in favour of the inoculation. This gave encouragement to go on, and ordinary farmers were induced to experiment, as, unless it was of use to them, there would be no reason for exploiting the bacteria.

All the following reports are from farmers who in most instances used the cultures themselves:

"I had to give up sowing clover seed, as I never could get it to grow. This year I had it inoculated, and to look at the field you would think every seed sown had grown."

"This year I inoculated red clover seeds, and now I have clover growing where it would never grow before."

"The field is noticeable a long way off, the plants are already almost a foot high and growing in spite of frost and snow; five or six great rich stalks grow from the same root, ludding ahead vigorously, and the top is covered flat with a wealth of leaf. This on land on which we never could get clover to survive the winter before."

"My inoculated clover seed has been a great success. I have fully double crops as compared with those not inoculated."

These reports are all typical of a great many received from every county in Ireland, and though I have some in which there are no good results reported, these are all from land rich in nitrogen where it was not reasonable to expect an increase, as ordinarily clover grew luxuriantly and could not well be increased. On the other hand, I have reports from rich lands showing large increases, the inference being that before one can say definitely rich soil does not require the bacteria it should be tried and tested. With regard to peas and beans the reports are on a par with the clover:

"Not for years have I had such a crop of peas."



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ST. DONATS CASTLE: THE MAHOGANY CHAMBER. "COUNTRY LIFE."

selective cultivation has given us some very beautiful forms indeed, derived in every case, however, from a wild sport to begin with. It is one of the peculiar features of the fern-hunting we are considering that we are indebted to Nature for all the types of variation, the original designs, so to speak, and all we can do when we find marked forms is to sow them and select those which show this form on still more marked lines and so improve it. Another type or class of "sports" consists of abnormally divided ferns. The common polypody of the hedge banks and old wall tops, for instance, is only once divided, each frond being like two bluntly-toothed combs set back to back; but quite a number of varieties have been found wild in which the teeth of these combs are themselves toothed or even divided and redivided so as to lose all resemblance to the common type, while being much more beautiful. Ferns also sport in many other ways, in the shape of their sub-divisions as well as number, in habit of growth and also in size, some being tiny dwarfs, little gems of compact verdure, while others are extra robust, so that with all this diversity of size and make, it is obvious that it is nothing less

"Never before have I had such a crop of peas and beans. French beans in clusters of five and six immense pods. On one stalk of inoculated peas I counted twenty-eight large pods."

"My inoculated peas and beans are very far ahead of those not inoculated."

"My inoculated sweet peas were a great success and tremendously admired. They continued in bloom till the frost killed them in October, two months after those not inoculated were over."

"*Vetches*.—The inoculated seed went right ahead from the start. The roots were covered with a mass of the nodules, and the plot yielded on being cut green 23 tons to the acre. The seed not inoculated yielded only 11 tons 7cwt. The increase in favour of inoculation was 11 tons 13cwt. per acre, or over 100 per cent."

The foregoing are all reports of direct results on the crop inoculated, but so far it is not easy to get reports of the indirect results from the enrichment of the soil by the bacteria. As Professor Finlayson states, "the value of leguminous residue in the soil represents a definite money value." The lowest estimate is the American 122lb. of nitrogen per acre, taken from the atmosphere. This is equal to 800lb. of nitrate of soda, the current value of which is about £4 10s. to £5. Is it necessary to point out the advantage of this? It is apparent on the face of it. Still, some may say it would be madness to put such a quantity of nitrogen in the soil. Certainly it would be sheer waste if put on in the form of nitrate of soda, as three-fourths of it would be washed away, even if it did not destroy the crop. But we must remember the nitrogen put in the soil by the leguminous crop is introduced in Nature's way, and therefore the right way. It is held in the soil in the roots of the plants, and is available by the following crop in proportion as it is required, and what is not used then is still held in reserve. The nearer we keep to the lines of Nature and help her in her own methods, the more likely we are to get her to produce bountifully. A day or two ago I received the following:

"Last year I sowed a field of beans, half of which I inoculated. This year I have wheat growing in the same field, and the part where the inoculated beans were last year is already twice the growth of the other part."

There is no mention made as to whether the inoculated beans were a better crop than the others, but this shows the great enrichment of the soil caused by the inoculation. These things were all known before we got the bacteria, but were only very sceptically received. Now they have been tested, and it has been shown conclusively that, where used judiciously, the cultures are beneficial. In the course of the experiments, however, it appeared as if "the half had not been told." It has been shown that the bacteria has influence on the leguminous plant, and through it on the crops following; but the very first season other unthought of results were obtained in some cases.

"What remained over after inoculating the seeds I diluted with water and sprayed over part of a field of first crop Italian grass and Alsike clover. The results were most remarkable, as the sprayed portion forged ahead from the start, and at cutting time was easily twice as heavy a crop as the remainder of the field, the *rye grass* having apparently benefited as much as the clover."

This was startling enough, but more was to follow. In County Mayo a field was sown with oats, clover and grasses in the ordinary way, for hay and pasture the following years. On part of the field the clover sown was inoculated with the culture, the other part being sown with clover not inoculated, everything being the same except the inoculation. The astonishment of the owner may be surmised when the part of the field where the inoculated clover seed had been sown produced one-third more in both grain and straw than the other part. A sheaf from each part of the field was sent to me in Dublin. The difference in size was very marked. The smaller sheaf was from the part of the field where the clover was not inoculated, and there is now no clover in that part, while in that from which the larger came the clover is still luxuriant, and the grass sweeter and better. I exhibited both these sheaves at Balls Bridge Horse Show, where they attracted a great amount of interest, and an expert in grain declared that the grain in the larger sheaf was superior in every way to that of the smaller. The theory this extraordinary result has evolved is that the oats, being abraded when the clover and grasses were sown, and consequently the stronger growing, absorbed from the roots of the inoculated clover a certain amount of the extra nitrogen produced by the bacteria. Whether this theory is right or wrong, the result remains; but, if it is wrong, the only other theory possible is that the bacteria nitrify the soil apart from the leguminous plant, and, if that is so, it opens up an enormously wide area for the use of the culture. In another case, in County Down, the report shows an increase of 70 per cent. in grain and 100 per cent. in straw with inoculated clover against uninoculated. Enough has now been shown to prove what vast possibilities there are for increase of crops in the use of the bacteria. An interesting feature in both the cases specified is that the parts of the fields where the inoculated clover was sown have since produced larger quantities of hay than the other parts, thus showing the influence the bacteria are still exerting.

Another very extraordinary result was reported, viz., the reclamation of waste cutaway bog land where heather was

growing into a fertile soil without tillage. In January, 1906, a top-dressing of potassic superphosphate was applied to the heather, a chain-barrow being run over it. At the end of April a mixture of grasses and inoculated red clover seeds were sown, followed by a top-dressing of soil of about the same quantity as the potassic superphosphate. At the end of June a most curious crop was to be seen of clover and grasses growing up strong and thick through the heather, and in one part of the field through rushes and bent. At the end of August, after close examination, it was found that the heather was dead at the lower end of the stem, so that a scythe easily went through it, and the whole was mown down. The heather, rushes and bent did not reappear, and in December a sod of this turf was sent to me in Dublin. This had a thick sole of rich herbage, and this season I understand a fine crop of hay is growing. These were all exhibited and caused a sensation, but some people expressed doubts as to the genuineness of the reports. This, coupled with the extraordinary nature of the experiment, induced me to journey specially to see the farm for myself. It was situated six miles from Ballyhaunis, the nearest railway station, and I cycled out. Taking a wrong turning, I got a few miles out of my way, and, after being directed a few times, I came across a field which seemed to answer the description given, and on alighting I found I was right, though I thought I was still some distance from the farm, having come in at the back on a by-road. There was the field with its rich green colour, and the holes from which the sods were cut. There was the corner left with the heather still growing, and round the edges, as well as in the ditches, could be seen traces of the heather, all showing that the truth had not been exaggerated. It certainly was well worth going all the way to see, and I was not surprised to hear that some Englishmen from near Manchester had also been to see it. I saw also the field where the year before a crop of four tons of hay per acre had been taken off land the rent of which was 5s. per acre. This also was said to be chiefly owing to the action of the culture. If land of this description can be brought into fertility and produce such crops, the cultures have found their mission, even supposing they are of no value to other soils. As I cycled back to the station I passed through miles of such land, at present useless for anything, and the thought naturally arose—why not treat this land in the same way and bring it into cultivation.

At the present time the Congested Districts Board are buying estates at enormous cost to relieve congestion, and here were thousands of acres to be had for a mere song which could easily be brought into cultivation. If this were done, what a boon to the whole of the three kingdoms! We might not then be afraid of the famine predicted by Dr. Crookes when he warned the world that its wheat-producing powers would soon be exhausted owing to the absence of nitrogen for the crops. Four-fifths of the atmosphere consists of nitrogen, an illimitable store if only we can get hold of it. A great effort is being made to extract it by electricity, and it is being done at enormous cost, being produced in the form of nitric acid. But here we have Nature's agents, bacteria doing the work, and producing nitrogen in a form available by the plants at a trifling expense. D. I. BARBOUR.

ELEPHANTS IN AFRICA AND THEIR ORIGIN.

UNTIL quite recently zoologists and sportsmen alike recognised but two species of living elephants—the Indian and the African. But our notions of what constitute specific differences have changed, and this change has led to a closer scrutiny of species which have a wide geographical range. Applied to the Indian and African elephants, it has become clear that the latter, at any rate, may now be readily split up into no less than a dozen distinct geographical races or sub-species! This sub-division, as Mr. Lydekker has just shown in the Proceedings of the Zoological Society, is based upon the size and shape of the ear, the form of the skull and of the tusks. In the size and shape of the ear, it has now become apparent, there is an enormous range, though, so far, it does not appear that this range is in any way correlated with the conditions of existence under which these several sub-species are living. In the elephants of the most southern portion of Africa, now to be known as *Elephas africanus capensis* and *Elephas africanus toxotus*, the ears attain a huge size, but even these are eclipsed by those of a giant killed on the Blue Nile by Mr. A. Haig. The ears of this beast—which is estimated to have stood no less than 13ft. high—measured, from crest to lappet, 6ft. 5½in., and had a transverse diameter of 4ft. 1½in. It is proposed to recognise this animal as representing a distinct race—*Elephas africanus oxyotus*. To this race belonged the Queen's elephant from Abyssinia, which at one time was exhibited in the Zoological Gardens. The elephants of Mashonaland, British East Africa and the Lake Rudolph District are similarly large-eared forms, and having ears of quite distinct shape, are to be known, from their discoverers, respectively as *Elephas africanus Selousi*, *Elephas africanus Peeli* and *Elephas africanus Cavendishi*. Curiously, the race with the smallest ears is to be found in North-East Rhodesia, and is to be known as *Elephas africanus Knockenhauri*. The ear of the type specimen, which has a height of

11ft. 4in., measures only 4ft. 2½in. from crest to lappet and 3ft. 5in. in transverse diameter. Into the specific characters of each of these twelve geographical races we do not propose to enter here. But we may remark that Mr. Lydekker has brought to light another very interesting fact with regard to these giants. He has shown that the elephant from the region of Lake Albert Nyanza—which he proposes to call *Elephas africanus albertensis*—most nearly resembles the extinct *Elephas planifrons* of the Pliocene of the Siwalik Hills of Northern India! From this he suggests that the African elephants may be the descendants of

the fossil Indian species, and points out, in support of this contention, that there are many remarkable instances of affinity between the Pliocene mammals of India and the modern mammals of Africa. If Mr. Lydekker is right in his interpretation of the peculiar features of the Albert Nyanza elephant, then we must regard this as the most generalised, most primitive of the living elephants of Africa, and not the dwarf race—*Elephas africanus pumilio*—of the Congo discovered by Professor Noack, an animal which apparently does not attain a height of more than 7ft. W. P. PYCRAFT.

SHOOTING.

IMPROVEMENT OF HIGHLAND RED DEER.

UNDOUBTEDLY the best of the news which the sportsman has this year, in the early days of the shooting season, is that which comes from the forests. While grouse have been proved to be generally indifferent, partridges are known to have suffered terribly and wild pheasants have been a failure. In happy contrast to this calamitous account, the stags are said to be very good indeed, both in bulk and in head, and something like a record year is promised to the stalker. "There is many a slip," as we know; but, unless the weather is so villainously bad that no one will care to go on the hill or so glaringly fine that it will be impossible to approach deer during the whole of the stalking, it is not easy to see what can happen to bring the good promise to naught. Having come through so far and so very well, it is not possible for the deer to suffer any great setback. Doubtless the character of the year was all in favour of their finding abundant pasture, and beyond all question this has been the chief cause of their present fine condition. Many fears were expressed in the spring that the constant wet, generally rendering the deer restless, as a consequence of their coats and their beds being alike continually soaked, would have had its usual ill effect, but the richness of the pasture seems to have had the better and stronger influence, with the result that stags are big, both of horn and body. With regard to the velvet on the horn they do not appear either remarkably forward or backward. Most will be ready to shoot about the usual date, but usually one looks first, and rightly so, at the condition of the weather as controlling the condition of the deer, or, at least, as the chief agent in controlling their condition. It is permissible, however, to hope that, together with the influence of the weather, which is so notoriously capricious, we may also regard another influence, more constant, as not without its effect on the deer stock in the Highlands generally, and in some part responsible for the good results which we are confidently expecting in the stalking season on which we are just entering.

Although the deer are an old institution in the Highlands, perhaps as old as any mammal on the Highland hills, being, as we suppose, a remnant surviving of the deer stock which once ranged over the whole of Great Britain, the years during which any intelligent interest has been given to their care and welfare have been relatively few. The beginning of all things—equivalent to the Siege of Troy in the history of the Highland deer—is their status as we find it described in the pages of St. John, when there was virtually no private property in the deer of the forests any more than in the trout of the burns. Deer fences were unknown. The period of freedom from all law was followed by years in which the deer became more and more appreciated, the value of forests constantly rising, and a policy of enclosure within fences being practised more and more. At the same time the number of hinds was increasing enormously, the stags were being shot down harder and harder, and the consequence was that both heads and bodies were diminishing year by year. At length a point was reached at which the attention of Highland proprietors was drawn to these facts so forcibly that they could not be overlooked any longer. The policy of enclosing forests has been generally abandoned, so that the deer now roam far more freely, and there is less inbreeding; some of the hinds are shot in almost every forest, the fine stags are now and then spared, and the bad stags, the "hummels," and the "switches," killed off. On certain of the forests it has been possible to note and gauge the improvement in the general stock which these measures have brought about. On the Reay forest, for instance, the average bulk of the stags is said to have been appreciably increased, and in the comparatively small forest of Strathvaick, Mr. Williams has improved both the weight and the heads of his stags. Apart from particular and local instances such as these, it is not too much to hope and to think that the stock of deer in the Highlands generally is benefiting by the wiser policy which has prevailed lately. The effect of the change is one which naturally would not be noticed at first, and it may be that the fine condition of the deer this year is due, in some degree, at least, to the change. It would be satisfactory if we could think so, and would encourage a

perseverance in the more modern methods which are certainly the more rational.

Of course, this is a line of argument which touches here and there on questions which still lie within the region of controversy. It is not even yet universally admitted that hinds should be killed, though opinion to that effect is immensely preponderating. The policy of sparing the big stags is also still debated, some stalkers averring that it leads to inbreeding, and that a good stag, by the time he has become distinguished by an exceptionally good head, has already done his best work in imparting his characteristics to the stock. In this connection a good deal depends on the age at which a stag is at its finest development, and less directly on the term of his natural life, and it is very significant of our remarkable ignorance of some of the main facts in the life history of a creature which has been one of the first objects of sport for so many years, that there is still a great difference of opinion on this subject among those who might be thought likely to be the best informed upon it. A considerable controversy, which we need not reopen now, was waged in the columns of *COUNTRY LIFE* about this very point not long ago. The old idea used to be that the "hart's" natural length of years was a hundred. Some of the most intelligent of modern stalkers are disposed to divide that round number by four in order to arrive at the term. This wide difference of figures is very striking. All the evidence collected from observation of deer enclosed in parks—that is to say, where strict observation is most possible, shows that the stag passes his best many years before reaching even the quarter of a century; but it is also certain that in the rich pasture of Lowland parks deer both arrive at their best and also pass it a good deal earlier in life than in the wild and poor circumstances of a Highland forest. The argument from their condition in the one set of circumstances to their probable condition in the other is not to be pushed too far; but it may certainly be taken to be worth something, and it is very wonderful if a creature which passes his best at the age of sixteen or seventeen in a park, keeps his vigour of body and splendour of head to the age of 100 in a forest. This is a hard thing which those ask us to believe who point for their testimony to legends of old stags and to instances of stags with peculiar heads which are said to have been seen year after year during several human generations. There is at least the possibility of a mistaken identity in these instances which are required to prove so strange a thing. For the moment it is satisfactory to think that the future for the Highland red deer looks brighter than it has seemed for many years.

PARTRIDGES "PATCHY."

OVER the greater part of the country, at all events, the harvest is being secured—with much excess of labour in places, owing to the "laying" of the crop by storms of wind and rain—a good deal earlier than one would have expected, considering the absence of the sunshine which has been deemed essential (wrongly, as it seems) for its ripening. The clearing of the fields and the actual operations of harvesting have given an opportunity of seeing what the partridges have been doing, and the result is to show them to be certainly no worse than we had expected, and, rather like the harvest itself, on the whole better than weather conditions promised. The description which sums up the situation tersely, so far as it is possible to gauge the situation thus early, is that the birds are "patchy"; but where the patches are at their best, it is not to be supposed that they are very good, whereas where they are at their worst, they are very bad. Moreover, the bad patches seem to be the big patches—the rule—the good patches are the small exceptions. On which account they will be the more appreciated.

NUMBERS OF STOATS.

Keepers in the Eastern Counties are complaining this season of the appearance of what they call "travelling stoats." These battalions of stoats, which appear from time to time, with no ostensible cause for their unusual numbers, seem rather analogous, among the small mustelidae, with those better recognised and more extensive invasions of armies of rodents, of which the lemmings of Scandinavia afford the most striking example, and the voles are most conspicuous in our own country. Singular legends are told of the ferocity of these stoats when met in their travelling companies, and it is even said that they will attack men. Apart from these moving battalions, stoats seem to be in unusual numbers all over the country, occurring coincidentally with very large numbers of mice and voles, on which they prey—wherein they are of greater benefit to the agriculturist and gamekeeper than is often appreciated.

GROUSE GOOD IN THE MOY DISTRICT.

The reports which we received from time to time through the summer seemed to show a probability that the fine grouse moor country belonging to the Mackintosh—Moy itself and the adjoining Mealmore, which is now in the tenancy of Mr. Albert Vickers—had escaped most of the evil weather which had spoiled remarkably good grouse prospects all over the country. Later, just before shooting began, it seemed that this district, too, was smitten with a panic that it could not escape the common lot, and ill reports arrived from these parts also. It is well seen now that the earlier and more hopeful accounts were the more accurate. Clearly that district has been especially favoured, for the grouse are well up to their usual high standard even on these moors, which carry more birds for their acreage than any others in Scotland. At Mealmore on one of the beats they actually

made a record bag for that particular beat. Some optimistic accounts have represented the grouse as being good right away from that latitude as far up as the north of Caithness, but, unfortunately, that is not quite correct. Certainly on some of the Caithness moors the birds have suffered badly, though on others they have done really well, and on moors farther to the north of Inverness-shire than Moy the grouse are bad. Only the regions along the Moray Firth seem to have enjoyed a special dispensation. With the red grouse, however, as with the red deer, there is some reason to think that a more intelligent care for their interests is bringing about a general improvement in the health of the stock, so that birds suffer less than they did from the effects of bad weather and other ill influences.

[FURTHER NOTES ON SHOOTING WILL BE FOUND ON OUR LATER PAGES.]

ON THE GREEN.

ACTORS AND GREEN FEES.

THE council of the Actors' Association has been applying to several of the golf clubs of the country for a reduction of the visitors' fees in special favour of the members of the association. In many cases the response has been favourable; fees for members of the association have been reduced accordingly. It is impossible not to feel sympathy with the request. It is not pleasant to think that on the day after you have been well amused by the art of an actor on the previous evening, you are a party to taking 2s. 6d. from his pocket for the use of your club and ground. The actor, in the humbler ranks of the profession, is generally a person to whom 2s. 6d. is a sum for consideration. On the other hand, the particular request is one which seems to touch the very vitals of the more general question of visitors' fees, for the man who happens to be opposed to the reduction of such fees in the actor's favour has a ready and obvious argument at command. "If you reduce for actors, for whom can you refuse to reduce? Why should the actor enjoy special privileges?"

There may be a good answer to this, but it is not obvious, and we must leave it as a missing-word competition. But, actor or no actor, visitors' fees are sometimes very severe, and the question whether they should be reduced in favour of one class or one profession depends a good deal on what they are for the rest of the world to start with. They vary greatly. To name an average standard, the rule in regard to them often is that the visitor, introduced by a member, has two days in any one year free. After that he has to pay half-a-crown a day for the right of playing. That seems a fair, not an outrageous, rate. At a golf club which the present writer visited lately the charge for a single round of the course (we arrived so late in the day that there was clearly no time—no daylight—for more than one round) was 3s. 6d. It was an inland course. There appeared to be no free days of grace. Such a charge seems a little severe. Of course, a club is perfectly justified in charging what it pleases on its own property, and the members who keep the course up by their subscriptions have every right to protect themselves, by the imposition of a high visitors' fee, from the invasion of their green by a host of strangers—greatly to the inconvenience of the members. A compromise must be struck between a mean selfishness, illiberality and grasping at the visitors' purses and a too excessive indulgence of the sportsmanlike doctrine of free golf. It is quite clear, however, that the amount of the fee must have a considerable bearing on the question whether it should be remitted as a special favour to privileged persons. Thus the actor, to go back to the instance which suggested the argument, would not, it is to be presumed, feel that he had much to grumble at if he could get two days free, and subsequently was allowed to play for half-a-crown a day. If his stay was for a week, as it would be likely to be if he was on tour, he would get four days for 5s., and playing golf at this rate all round the country would not do badly. On the contrary, if he were to be charged 3s. 6d. for each day that he played, without any grace whatever, then he might justly think that the conduct of the club was not quite sportsmanlike, always provided that no special circumstances of threatened congestion seemed to justify so large a charge. Ideal justice would demand that the fee should bear some proportion to the excellence of the course to which its payment gives access, but in practice this is not found to be the case. As a rule the best courses are rather far remote from centres of civilisation, so that they are not beset by great crowds of daily visitors. On them the visitor rather takes the form of the "temporary member," allowed the privileges of the club and course for a considerable length of time, and the same arguments do not apply to him as to the daily visitor. His is "another story." The green fees, as a rule, are in proportion rather to the congestion with which the course is menaced. Some of the best links are on public land, or land belonging to the municipality, and the municipality, interested in attracting visitors to buy beef and

bootlaces and any other necessities of life, are, as a rule, indisposed to charge even such a fee as shall grant tolerable immunity from crowding to the ordinary members of the club. The actor, or the visitor of any other profession, has nothing whatever to complain of, and requires no special favours, when he comes to a course where these principles prevail. The ordinary members are those that have the grievance. It is seldom, however, that the actor's duties take him to those corners of the earth where links are of first-class quality and where golfers are not too many. He goes rather to those centres where his manager expects him to draw good companies in the evening, and where the golf course, seldom of a high merit, is apt to be beset by all sorts and conditions of visiting men, women and children, so that in self-defence the members are compelled to impose a heavy fee, which probably the majority of them regret, even while their green reaps the benefit of it. In such circumstances as these they would most likely be only too glad to avail themselves of an opportunity of lightening the burden for those whom they could see their way to favour without establishing a precedent for the indiscriminate lowering of the fees and the admission of the "profane vulgar" on the course; and in such a case actors on tour might reasonably expect special favour during the days that they are playing in the town to which the golf course is adjacent. In fact, this is eminently one of the many instances in which "Circumstances alter cases"—the cases in point meaning green fees, in relation to the theatrical profession.

NECESSITY OF WATER FOR PUTTING GREENS.

A CHANGE of opinion in regard to the upkeep of greens is evident in the different view which is now taken of the necessity (that is really not too extreme a word to express it) of laying on water to putting greens if they are to be kept in really fine condition. A year or two ago the idea (gathered from experience on a certain course most conveniently close to London, where the greens were admirably good without water) prevailed that water was, at all events, a superfluity, and even that greens, like ducks, were better without it. Unfortunately, some later experience has strikingly proved the fallacy of this easy and inexpensive opinion. The "dry process" was tried, and was found wanting on the new links at Sandwich; there, at length, they have the water laid on, but only after the greens had suffered badly from the drought last year. Then at Le Touquet, just across the Channel, they tried the same experiment, but again with the same result, so that it has now been determined to connect all the greens with the water company's mains—a course which ought, no doubt, to have been taken when the greens were first made. It is easy to be wise after the event; but the mistakes which have proved expensive elsewhere ought to be valuable as lessons for future makers of greens.

GOLF MEETINGS CLASHING IN WALES.

It is possible that there may be adequate explanations and reasons, but to the uninitiated in the mysteries of Welsh golfing affairs it does look as if there was something not quite right in the way that they are managed. To the world outside the gallant little Principality it appears rather curious that at one and the same time there should be in progress the Welsh Championship at Porthcawl, under the ægis of the Welsh Golfing Union, the open summer meeting of the Royal St. David's Club at Harlech and the Aberdovey Club's open amateur meeting at Aberdovey. It is generally understood that Harlech and Aberdovey have mutual disputes as to which is the chief golfing centre and which has the best links in Wales. Here are these two in competition, and, besides, a championship meeting on the fine course at Porthcawl. With the utmost respect to Welsh golfers it is not to be thought that they can be in all these three places at once, and the natural result of the coincidence of the three meetings would seem to be to diminish the interest of each by one-third of what ought to attach to it. There may, as we say, be adequate reasons, but they are not obvious.

MASSY AND TAYLOR AT SKEGNESS.

The prospects of seeing Massy in a set match other than an exhibition seem a little remote, for his reply to Braid's challenge is that he will meet him in April, and to Ray's challenge that he wishes to meet Braid before anyone else. This appears, in effect, to be deferring any meeting with Ray till some later date than April—which is not hurrying events. In the meantime, the statement is repeated that Massy will be qualified to play in the Southern Section of the Professional Golfers' Association for the *News of the*

World prizes, and we may hope that this is true. The result of his match on Saturday with Taylor at Skegness, though this was only of an exhibition character, adds to the present interest in professional golf. Massy, who was obviously nervous at the start, putted weakly, and was 5 down at the end of 9 holes. Playing with more confidence coming home he stood 2 down at the end of the 18 holes; but the leeway to make up was too great, and he lost the match by 3 and 2 to play. Taylor has seemed to be Massy's most dangerous rival ever since he ran second to the Frenchman at Hoylake. It will be remembered that though all the rest of the best went to La Boulie, only to encounter a second defeat at Massy's hands, Taylor was not among the beaten. He did not go to seek trouble across the seas. It is a pity, however, that the champion should be so modest.



MASSY BUNKERED ON THE WAY TO THE SEVENTH GREEN.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

THE RED COAT.

IN a late number of *C. B. Fry's Magazine*, a correspondent touched upon the dying fashion of the wearing of the red coat on the golf links. He chronicled a fact which has long been obvious to all golfers whose experience of the game goes back a couple of decades or more; but he found himself unable to offer a reason for the desuetude of what seems to have been a highly useful as well as fairly widespread custom among all classes of players. There is only one workable theory available to account for the disappearance of the red coat on the links. It is the influence of that wayward child Fashion:

Disguise it as you will,
To right or wrong, 'tis fashion guides us still.

The ever-changing fashion in the cut and style of golf dress wears out more apparel than the player; and anyone who attends a championship meeting nowadays will always have many varied and interesting subjects of study in noting the Protean forms of golf fashion, though he may never see a red coat. Who is it, then, among golfers that gives the pendulum of fashion the swing? Obviously, it must be the best players, or, at least, those few and choice spirits whose personality and playing reputation combined serve to focus public attention upon them, thereby

leading other minds to adopt almost insensibly the same habits. If, for example, Mr. Balfour, Mr. John Ball, Mr. Laidlay, Mr. Maxwell and other leading players were suddenly to become convinced of the great public utility of wearing a red coat, apart from the otherwise attractive side of personal adornment, it would scarcely be rash to predict that a good many golf tailors would receive a surprisingly sudden demand for red jackets. They would give a fillip to the revival of an old fashion much in the same way that Vardon,

by taking to knickerbockers, has led many of his professional brethren to follow the example.

Hence it is that what has been well described as the baneful influence of imitation has led to the pretty complete disappearance of the red coat from the links. Another possible influence at work has been a tacit desire to differentiate one class of player from another in point of style, handicap and general efficiency. The plus and scratch men much prefer to incur the odium of breaking a club law by donning the cast-off remnants of the wardrobe than to allow themselves to be lost in the indistinguishable multitude through wearing a red coat. Better be a goat in an old Harris tweed jacket than an unrecognisable member of the gaily-coated flock of sheep scattering divots all over the links. The wearing of a uniform has an awkward tendency to conceal some striking personalities. A multitude of red coats on the links is something in the nature of a democratic leveller; all are foot soldiers to the undiscerning eye, and there appear to be neither generals nor captains. To assert your playing individuality, therefore, by standing aloof from the crowd of red coats is one method, at any rate, of earning passing distinction. But if there is an aristocracy in golf who ban the red coat, there is also the struggling mass of dufferdom who stoutly protest that they cannot possibly think of wearing a red coat until they have screwed their handicaps down by patient practice to a relatively low level. That ideal is one of the despairing counsels of perfection. It is never attained even by a very wide margin, with the inevitable result that the promised red coat is never



J. H. TAYLOR APPROACHING THE EIGHTEENTH GREEN.

bought, or, if it is bought, it hangs a prey to moths and microbes on some disconsolate nail. In this way the wearers of the red coat on the links approach in dimensions the thinnest wafer of ham placed between two enormously thick layers of bread; they are the golfing *tertium quid* left as the residue of aristocratic indifference and the ineptitude of dufferdom; they are the homely, contented middle class, who find the old custom good and seemly, worthy of being upheld in face of all the caprices of golfing fashion.

The old golf clubs passed coercive laws, enforced by penalties and fines, to secure that the red coat should be worn on the links. But even these precautions seem to have been wholly unavailing in attaining a successful or even fairly general observance of the rule. If one scans the old photographs of golfing groups at St. Andrews and elsewhere taken in the early manhood of Tom Morris and Allan Robertson it will be seen that several, at least, among the best-known players did not wear red coats. Coercive penalties, therefore, will not serve to bring back the era of the red coat as a garb to be worn by the golfer in play. Some more rationally persuasive method must be adopted to convince players of its serviceableness in the interests of the game and the non-golfing public. It is the utility of the red coat which stands out as its greatest merit. The red coat worn by the golfer on links that are largely used by the general public is a badge of honour as well as a shield of defence. It shows every player, as well as every member of the public, who is playing the game and who is not; it pleases the eye in its contrast with the surrounding green of the turf; it is a symbol of warning to the public unfamiliar with the game; it is an unfailing point of beauty in the general landscape of the links; and last, but by no means least, it is a picturesque and becoming dress for every golfer, whether old or young.

A. J. ROBERTSON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOLF.

SIR,—It has been to me a matter of much interest to read in your excellent paper the various articles on "the Government of St. Andrews," written as they are by many of the most prominent golfers on this side of the water. To one whose golfing life has been mostly spent on the Western shores of the Atlantic they have proved doubly interesting, and I have consequently learned much therefrom upon existing conditions in this country that I never knew before. To enter now into the various *pros* and *cons* as expressed by your various correspondents would be impossible on my part without making further prolonged study of all sides of the question in this country, and I have not time to do this. On the situation in the United States and the call there is there for a revision and simplification of the present code of rules, I feel more at home, having, in a small way, had

some experience in the management of the game in that country during the past few years. It is the one desire in that country among all true lovers of the game to remain loyal to St. Andrews and to faithfully abide by and adopt its rulings. To do otherwise would be fatal to the best interests of the game, and no one appreciates this fact more than the American player himself. The vast expansion of the game in our country, however, and the varied conditions under which it is played, have made apparent there the necessity for some changes in the present code if it is to remain the one desired for universal use. Some correspondence is, I know, being carried on between the authorities on both sides of the Atlantic, and it is hoped that only good will come of such an exchange of ideas. We have not in America as yet either the traditions or generations of golfers behind us that you have here to act as our mentors and instructors, and consequently a more careful study of the rules has to be made in our country by any beginners wishing to play the game in the way it should be played than is usually the case, I find, with beginners in this country. A more simple code, and one with some few changes to bring it up-to-date and to make it applicable to the game, wherever played, is what is desired, and it is to be hoped that the Royal and Ancient Club will take upon itself the responsibility of furnishing golfers the world over with such an one. The task may be difficult, but ought not to be more than can be carried out successfully. To my mind it would scarcely require the same amount of skill or labour which has been expended at various times on the present somewhat complicated code. The position of acting as legislators for the world is one that perhaps St. Andrews has not sought for; perhaps is not to its liking, but I can hardly believe it is one that it will refuse to accept. The Marylebone Cricket Club has shown what can be done for the world in the kindred sport of cricket. Cannot St. Andrews follow its example in the world of golf? Of the many suggestions given in your paper on the government of St. Andrews, the one made by Mr. Herbert Fowler of handing over to the Rules of Golf Committee the full control of the game, as far as the laws are concerned, without further reference to a general meeting of the club, appeals to me most. The idea of inviting representatives of other unions or associations to serve on it is sound theoretically; but I doubt very much if it would prove practicable. Experience has led me to believe that a small committee, provided a careful selection of its members be made, will accomplish more than a larger and possibly more representative one. Given that the men who served on such a committee were fairly well acquainted with conditions ruling in both hemispheres, or, if not, would be willing to lend an ear to the various suggestions which might possibly emanate from districts other than those which have the good fortune to be located north of the Tweed, and I am sure that many of the present apparent causes for discontent would quickly disappear and the game be found to rest on a firmer foundation than ever. Radical changes are not what are required, as more often than not they do more harm than good. A little less conservatism, and possibly more attention to the demands of the outside world, is all that is required, in my mind, to make St. Andrews supreme, and recognised as such, the golfing world over—as it ought to be and must be if the game is to flourish in the way it is desired by all who have its true interests at heart. Should the evil day ever arrive when a division of control be made, the consequences would be horrible to contemplate, and it is to St. Andrews we look to prevent it from happening.—G. HERBERT WINDELER.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WORMS IN OLD FURNITURE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I have tried rubbing a raw onion on the inside of a bureau which was worm-eaten, and have had no trouble with that piece of furniture since.—W. H. W.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I have noticed in your issue of August 24th that one of your correspondents asks how to eradicate worms from old furniture. Let him try pouring boiling oil into the holes, and that will soon destroy the worms.—F. E. M. G.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—If "M. F. H." dresses his old oak with a solution of corrosive sublimate he will find no further trace of the mischief. Being a deadly poison, every vessel or brush used must be burned or buried. This is also a destroyer of dry rot in wood or walls.—R. B.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—To destroy worms in furniture I would suggest the following treatment: Solution of corrosive sublimate in methylated spirit $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to 1 pint, and poured into the holes. This will completely destroy them, but the polish will be affected by it, so that the wood will want repolishing afterwards.—R.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—I noticed in your issue of August 24th a letter from "M. F. H." asking for some way of eradicating worms from old furniture, and I thought your correspondent might be glad to know that after trying many other things in vain, we were most successful in getting rid of the worms that were destroying some beautiful old Italian oak furniture of my mother's, by using pure carbolic. We applied it liberally to the furniture with a brush, being careful not to get any carbolic on our hands, as it would burn one severely, and I never had any trouble with worms again. Of course the odour of the carbolic is very strong for a few days, so it is best to use it only on furniture in an empty room, but the odour soon evaporates. Where the worms were in the feet, we turned the furniture upside down, so that the carbolic should sink well into the holes.—E. J. B.

THE SWEETEST FLOWER THAT BLOWS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Please tell me in your paper the name of the most fragrant rose. I want to give a tree to a blind lady, so that the scent of the blooms may please her.—G. S. B. W.

[There is no question that the most fragrant rose is the cabbage or Provence rose, which has been, unfortunately, driven from our gardens by the flood of tea and hybrid tea sorts which have been introduced of late years. The "old cabbage" lingers, however, in many a cottage garden, and if it only gave more abundantly and over a longer season of its scent-filled flowers, we should plant it largely. The Penzance briars are very sweet, and other sorts which will scent the garden are A. K. Williams, Griss, an Teplitz, Charles Lefebvre, General Jacqueminot, Alfred Colomb, Dr. Andr , Augustine Guinoiseau, La France, Fisher Holmes, Louis van Houtte, U-rich Brunner, Gloire de Dijon, Mar chal Niel, Viscountess Folkestone and Mme. Abel Chatenay. A rose without scent is not interesting, unless it has the wonderful beauty of Frau Karl Druschki.—ED.]

TO ERADICATE NETTLES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—Hoeing or stubbing is of little use. The best plan I know of entails more labour, but is certain, and that is, with a pair of old leather gloves on, to pull them up by the roots, tearing the underground stems up as much as possible. This causes the stems to bleed, and death ensues. I have practically cleared a three-acre field by this method.—J. J. RAINEY.

THE SCOTS PINE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—In reply to Mr. Elwes's query in your issue of August 24th as to where I had seen the Scotch pine growing at a height of 2,700ft., I may say that the one mentioned was, and I hope is still, growing not far from the source of the river Dee on the south slopes of Brae Riach.—SETON P. GORDON.

FARMING PARSONS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE"]

SIR,—In the very interesting leading article in last week's issue of COUNTRY LIFE on the inherent objections to the position of parson-farmer, reference is made to Fielding's famous sketch of the hog-breeding curate, the

Rev. Mr. Trulliber, who, in the words of his creator, "was a parson on Sundays, but all the other six might more properly be called a farmer." The evils of such a system are, indeed, vividly exposed in the gross figure of Trulliber, as he serves his sties, hog-pail in hand, and stripped to the waistcoat, his apron covering a rotundity which much ale had "rendered little inferior to the beast he sold." Trulliber's outer man covered a nature wholly absorbed in callous greed, and the manners of this pig-farming curate are exemplified by his snatching his guest's alecup from his hand and himself swallowing the liquor, on the plea that he "caal'd vurst"; by his treatment of the poor drudge h's wife, who "milked his cows, managed his dairy, and followed the market with butter and eggs," who waited behind her husband's chair at table, and called him master; by his grins at poor Parson Adams's torn cassock which had seen ten years' service; and by his boorish laughter when the good Adams gets his famous roll in the pigsty mire. Readers of Fielding know Trulliber so intimately that to them it is scarcely credible that his portrait occupies but one brief chapter of "Joseph Andrews." But for the benefit of the students of the glebe question, to whom the pages of the great eighteenth century novelist are not familiar, I send the accompanying photograph of Cruickshank's admirable etching illustrating Parson Adams's adventure with his farming brother-in-laws. Even Fielding's scathing words scarcely afford a more forcible indictment of the system of the farmer-parson than does this brilliant example of Cruickshank's art. The leading article referred to speaks of the figure of Trulliber as doubtless "painted directly from the life of the eighteenth century." Those of your readers who are interested in the question may like to know that the great historian of Dorset, the Rev. John Hutchins, asserted that a curate of Metcombe, a village near East Stour (now

Stower), was the original of Parson Trulliber; adding, however, that this was denied by the unlucky curate's widow. "The house where he lived," says Hutchins, writing only some fifty or sixty years ago, alter the appearance of "Joseph Andrews," "seemed to accord with Fielding's description ('Joseph Andrews,' Book II., Chapter 14), and an old woman who remembered him observed 'that he dearly loved a bit of good victuals and a drop of drink.'" The fact that Trulliber was taken from the life is further attested by Fielding's earliest



biographer, Murphy, writing eight years after the great novelist's death, and with the added information that to the pig-breeding curate had fallen the honour of being Fielding's first tutor. "Henry Fielding," says Murphy, "received the first rudiments of his education at home, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Oliver, to whom we may judge he was not under any very considerable obligations, from the very humorous and striking portrait, given of him afterwards, as Parson Trulliber in 'Joseph Andrews.'" Fielding, as we know, constantly asserted that he painted "not men, but manners"; the fact that such a protest was necessary is but an additional proof of the truth of his pictures to the manners of his day. It would be of no little interest at the present moment if other well authenticated portraits, from the life, of farming parsons could be recovered from eighteenth and early nineteenth century literature; though it were vain, perhaps, to look for any sketch quite so "humorous and striking" as that of Parson Trulliber.—G. M. GOLDEN.

A TALL DELPHINIUM [TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Perhaps it may be of interest to some of your readers to see the size of a pale grey delphinium in my garden at Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire. The measuring-rod is 10ft. Two years ago the tallest spike was 6ft. 6in. I should



like to know whether this plant is of very exceptional height.—NORTHAMPTON.

THE LOGANBERRY.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Of late years quite a number of new fruits belonging to the *Rubus* (blackberry) tribe have been put on the English market. In most cases either America or Japan has been credited with their production, but the majority of these fruits are quite worthless, except perhaps from an ornamental point of view: their fruits are about as palatable as oak-apples or mild turnip. There are a string of American blackberries which I have seen described as bearing superb berries; but it was not explained that, prolific though they may be across the water, they will only fruit in this country in favoured spots and in exceptional seasons. The so-called American parsley-leaved blackberry is a variety of our common wild bramble, bearing fruit of inferior quality. Whatever the merits of the Japanese wineberry and the strawberry-raspberry may be from an æsthetic standpoint, they are worthless as mere fruit-bearers. It is not, however, my object to write of the wickedness of nurserymen, whose sins are chiefly sins of omission, and whose catalogues provide the most inspiring and fascinating literature I know. My object is to tell somewhat of the most useful fruit of recent introduction, viz., the loganberry. This fruit is said to be a cross between the raspberry and the blackberry, and certainly the berries bear a strong resemblance to both parents. In general habit it more closely resembles the blackberry, for the vigorous canes which it makes are of a rambling nature, and often attain a length of 10ft. to 15ft. The berries, which are as large and long as prize mulberries, are of a deep red colour and extremely luscious, having a subtle flavour of both parents. They are borne in great profusion on the last year's canes. As to culture, the loganberry is not particular in the matter of soil. In a light sandy soil heavy stable or farmyard manure may be dug in, and a mulch of manure about the roots in summer will encourage free growth and fruiting; very heavy clay soil may be lightened in the usual way by digging in short stable litter or road-scrappings (avoid, however, scrapings from macadamised roads); such strong loam as roses love is the most suitable. In

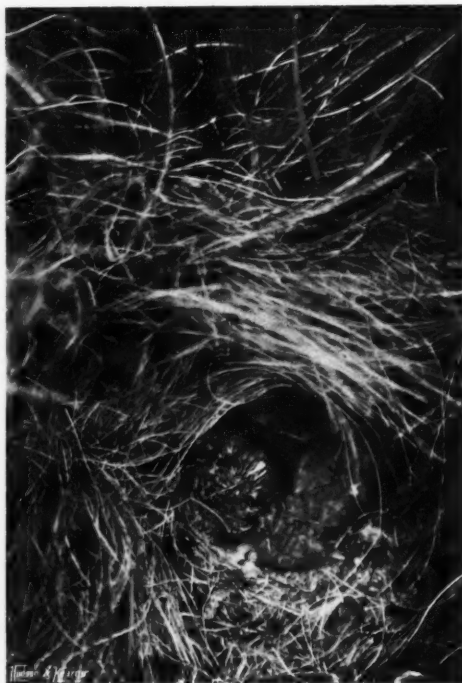


small gardens single isolated plants may be grown, their canes tied up to 6ft. or 8ft. stakes. For this purpose neat, cheap, and durable supports may be secured in the following way: Buy a 5ft. length of old 1in. iron gas piping (price only a few pence) and drive it 3ft. into the ground, and to the projecting 2ft. securely lash with stout tarred string a 6ft. or 8ft. bamboo cane of about 1½in. diameter. A strong loganberry plant should have produced four or five fruiting canes the previous year, and these are to be tied up to this bamboo support, and when in leaf will entirely hide it. As soon as the crop has been picked, the canes should be cut clean away at the ground level, and four or five of the strongest shoots which have meanwhile been throwing out at the root may be tied up in their place, to fruit the

following year. This is a satisfactory way of giving the loganberry a trial, but it may also be grown to advantage on a pergola or garden arch, fanned out on a fence or railing; or, when a quantity are to be cultivated, they may be trained on wires and treated exactly like raspberries, except that they should be planted further apart, and the supporting wires might be 5ft or 6ft. high, to accommodate the lengthy canes. Although the loganberry is not a particularly new invention, it is only during the last year or two that it has been recognised and planted to any considerable extent; but it is still not half enough known and cultivated. Being hardy and vigorous and an extraordinarily prolific bearer of large fruit, which is equally good raw, stewed, bottled, or as jam, I have no hesitation in recommending the loganberry to everyone who has a garden, large or small. I consider it the coming "small fruit." One fault of the loganberry I may as well point out, and that is that birds are far too fond of the fruit. They may not find out its virtues at once, but the second or third season they usually do, and straightway become a very serious trouble unless prevented by nets or intimidation.—CLARENCE ELLIOTT.

THE DESTRUCTION OF WASPS' NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."] SIR,—Referring to the method of destroying wasps' nests advocated by your correspondent "H.," a plan which I have adopted and which I have never known to fail in effect is as follows. Inject about half a pint to one pint of ordinary paraffin into the main entrance of the nest with the aid of a syringe, using plenty of force in so doing, and then tightly stop up the hole with a piece of turf. This should be done at night-time when the wasps are all at home, the nest having previously been marked down. Of course, if there is more than one entrance, paraffin must be injected into each hole to ensure the fumes getting down to the proper quarter. This effectually kills every wasp in the nest, and no further trouble need be taken. I enclose you a photograph of six nests, which I have taken this year within



bird put in two eggs? And why had not one of the nestlings managed to dispose of the other? Can two young cuckoos, of all birds, "in their little nest agree"?—G. SHARP.

THE TAMENESS OF A CHAFFINCH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I think my tame chaffinch deserves a place in COUNTRY LIFE, and I am sending you his portrait. He has been my garden companion for the last two years. We made friends over winter crumbs, and he has remained faithful through all seasons and weathers. His home, where he keeps his wife and nestlings, is some 300yds. or 400yds. away in the park, and in the spring, when he was busy feeding his young with caterpillars from the gooseberry trees, he would often stop on his way, lay down a couple of fat green caterpillars, take his biscuit from my hand, then pick up the grubs and proceed on his errand. He comes into my bedroom every morning soon after four o'clock in the summer, and chirps at my bedside till I give him his breakfast. He is a bit of an epicure, and prefers McVitie's Digestive Biscuits to any others, giving my hand a hard peck when I offer him the wrong ones. In the spring he brought his wife one day, or, rather, she followed him, as he seemed none too pleased at her sharing his meal. She would only feed near my hand, not on it, and watched the boldness of her mate, with her head on one side, in great bewilderment. She has not been again; but he brought two nestlings later on, and now one of them is almost as tame as his father; the other dashed himself against my window trying to get into the room and was, unfortunately, killed. My little friend is really a most companionable and lovable little person, and will sometimes perch on my window-sill after he has fed and give me his bright little song. He distinguishes me from anyone else, and knows me when I meet him quite a distance off in the fields. He assumes a great superiority over all the other birds, and attacks any others who dare to imitate his ways. There is one particular cock chaffinch—a dowdy, meek little bird, who would like to be as friendly as he is—who is his pet aversion, and it is quite amusing to see my bird spread out his wings, close his eyes, and give vent to the most unmusical croaks before he dashes at the interloper as he approaches my hand, and sends his feathers flying and him after them. Altogether, I have never seen such a tame wild bird, and often, when I am walking round the garden with new guests, and my chaffinch flies straight on to my hand from the trees, they will exclaim in astonishment, and rub their eyes, wondering if they see aright.—G. MEINERTZHAGEN, Brockwood Park.



200yds. of my garden. Perhaps you may think it sufficiently interesting to your readers to reproduce in your paper.—A. J. SMITH.

CUCKOOS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you an account of two cuckoos. One I found myself in a robin's nest, in the beginning of July, 1907, when it was fully fledged; it was very vicious and gave a sharp twittering cry when disturbed. I took it from the nest and put it in a large cage with hay. The nest was situated under a rotten stump in a bank by the roadside. It is a very pretty bird of a greyish colour, with six or seven white feathers across its head; it is still living and seems very healthy; it will sit on my hand quite quietly (as I have clipped its one wing), but is rather timid and shy. The other cuckoo was taken from a hedge-sparrow's nest about a week after No. 1, when quite young. It differed from the other very much, being of a dirty brown colour, with only one or two white feathers on its head. When it was quite fledged it had a slight attack of cramp, from which it seemed quickly to be recovering, when one day it died suddenly from what appeared to be a very bad attack of cramp. It was extremely vicious, and would often fly at my fingers when I put my hand into the cage to feed it. I give my cuckoo raw meat (beef for preference), hard-boiled eggs, dried flies, ants' eggs and moths, these last being his favourite food. He cannot as yet feed himself. I hope by feeding him thus and by keeping him in a warm room to keep him alive during the winter. I hope this account may be of some interest to you, and that you will think it worth putting in your next issue of COUNTRY LIFE. I thought you might also be interested to know that 800 queen wasps have been killed in the parish this spring.—URSULA RILEY, Ledbury, Hereford.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The accompanying photograph of a cuckoo in a lark's nest was taken while on holiday at Melrose. I chanced upon it while nearing the summit of the Eildons, the well-known hills in the vicinity

